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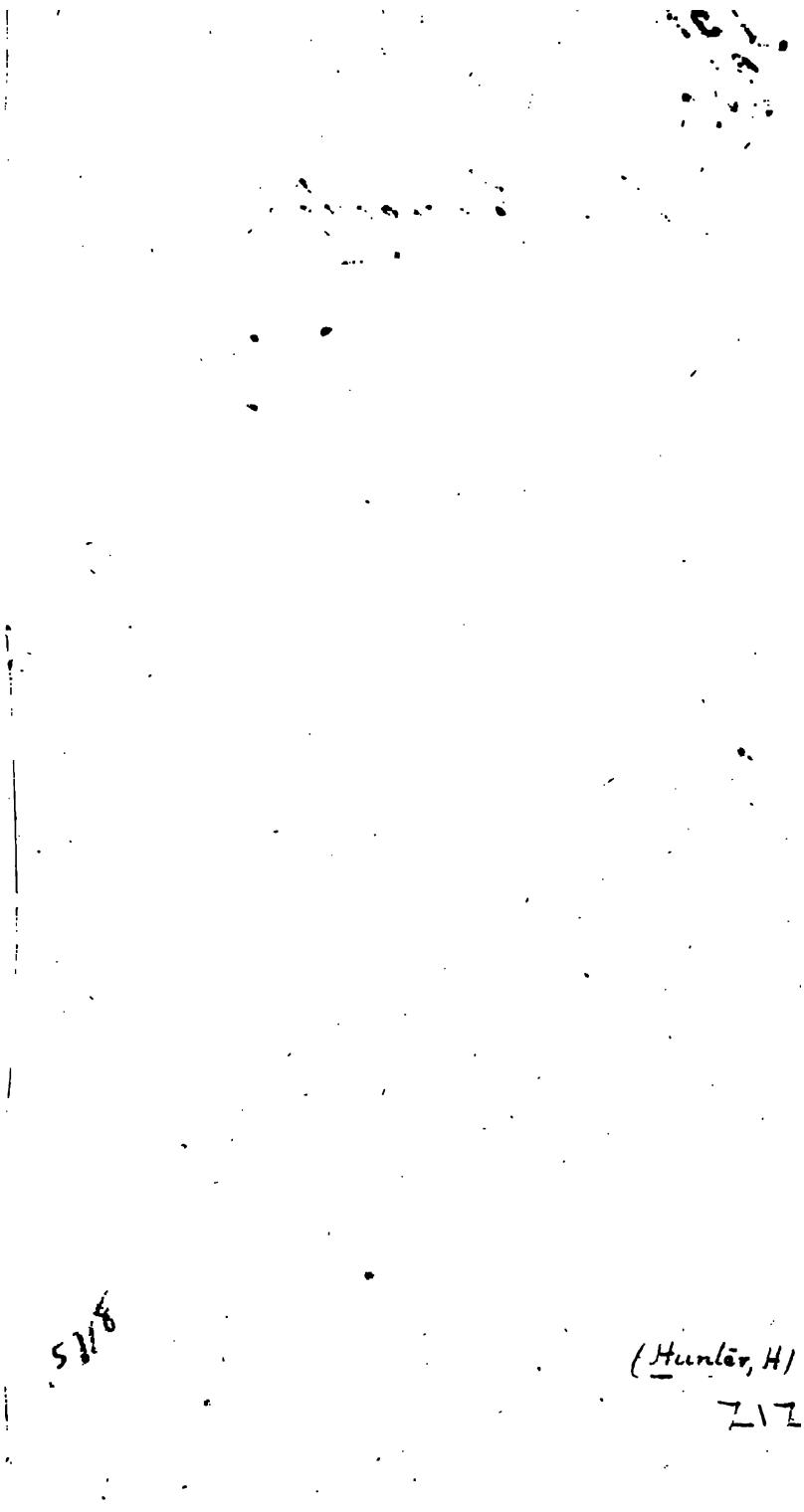

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HENRY HUNTER D.D.

Theol. (Coll.)

SERMONS,

AND OTHER

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES,

BY THE LATE

HENRY HUNTER, D. D.

MINISTER OF THE SCOTS CHURCH, LONDON WALL.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,

AND

A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF HIS WRITINGS.

" No farther seek his merits to disclose,
" Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
" There they alike in trembling hope repose
" The bosom of his Father and his God."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, 32, FLEET-STREET; J. HARDING, 36, ST. JAMES'S-STREET; BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH; AND GILBERT AND HODGES, DUBLIN.

1804.

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AMONG other literary projects entertained by Dr. Hunter, and which death, alas! prevented him from executing, was that of publishing a selection of Letters which had come under his observation, written chiefly by members of his own family, and applicable to, because they had arisen out of, the varied circumstances of real life and real feeling. The idea was first suggested to him by the accumulation of letters written by his son Thomas. The death of this much loved child only tended to strengthen his resolution of erecting from his own productions some memorial to his memory. In conformity to this design he had already planned a preface, and sketched the order of the work, when death intervened, and, for a time, blasted the project.

The same motives, however, which prompted the publication of these Sermons, continued to urge the execution of this his favourite scheme, and indeed to

urge it with redoubled force. In publishing the present Volumes a duty is discharged to Dr. Hunter only. In endeavouring to execute one of his darling plans, a duty will be discharged both toward himself and his son, and the memory of neither, we are confident, will suffer from the unreserved display which will here be made of their character.

Having thus spoken of the private feelings which urge the printing of these Letters, it remains to state the claims which, we trust, they will be found to possess upon public favour. The first and chief of these is their own intrinsic merit, sanctioned by the approbation of Dr. Hunter, who, though a fond father, was certainly never blind to the faults of his children, either as to talents or feeling. The second is the great desideratum in literature of a body of epistles written in a style adapted to every capacity, and claiming, at the same time, the attention of the student from their merits, and of the man of business from their simplicity—we call it a desideratum—for if we except the correspondence of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, of Robert Burns, and of William Cowper,

together with a few epistles of scattered individuals which might be selected, we have never seen a collection of printed letters which did not bear the most evident marks of having been intended for the public eye. The collection of letters by Swift, Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, &c. published about the middle of the last century, is certainly the most considerable in the English language, both for number and names. But let us not be deceived by names—let us examine this famed collection, and we shall find such pedantry, studied elegance, and affectation, as clearly evince them to be the productions of men struggling for superiority in antithesis and words, and displaying the strength of their feelings in the rounding of their sentences and the melody of their periods.

The Letters designed now to be published are at least free from such faults as these —if they display elegance, it is no meretricious affected elegance—if they speak to the heart, no high-sounding expressions for a moment betray the writer and conceal the man. They were written as they were felt, and we boldly affirm that they will speak to every heart.

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To the young, this publication will be found not without its charms, and certainly not without its peculiar utility. They are the letters of a young person of no common ability, and who, though cut off by an early death, has in them left a fair testimonial of his talents and his virtues. In them will be found lessons of filial duty and fraternal affection, of ardent friendship and sincere attachment, and the whole clothed in the language of a cultivated mind. To insist farther upon the advantages of such a publication to youth is obviously unnecessary.

It is sincerely hoped that this will not be considered as an attempt to draw further upon that fund of private friendship, from which the Editors of this work acknowledge to have already received so many obligations. Deprecating, as they do, any such idea, the nature and real merits of the work will, they are confident, fully secure them from the imputation, which, should they even suffer in the minds of a few, there will remain to them the satisfaction of having discharged a sacred duty to a father, a brother, and a friend.

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SERMON V.

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And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

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LUKE ii. 6. 7.

And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

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But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

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It is Christ that died, yea; rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

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But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

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Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

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SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF DR. HENRY HUNTER.

WHATEVER different opinions may be entertained concerning miscellaneous and indiscriminate collections of biographical sketches, it is certain that an account of the life of an author appears no where so much in its proper place as when prefixed to his works. After the perusal of the one, we enter with more satisfaction upon the study of the other; and on the contrary, having become acquainted with his works, we return with pleasure to renew and increase our intimacy with the author. In a word, when biographical sketches are heaped together, as they too generally are, the volume containing them

may be compared to a room full of portraits ill-assorted, which distract the mind by their variety, and induce a habit of attending to them rather for amusement than instruction. On the other hand, when attached to works of real merit, they resemble the portraits of departed friends, which we hang up in our closets, and the lineaments of which we delight to trace and retrace at every opportunity. We study the man and his works together, and improve in our knowledge of human nature, whilst we are catching the lessons of virtue and religion.

Henry Hunter, the fifth child of David and Agnes Hunter, was born at Culross, in Perthshire, on the 25th of August, 1741. In a family distinguished among the neighbours for abilities, he afforded an early prospect of becoming one day their boast and ornament—a quickness of apprehension, joined to a warmth of feeling, were the most remarkable characteristics of his early years. The hopes of all the family, by degrees, centred in him; and his pa-

rents, though incumbered with a provision for seven children, determined to give him the best education that the utmost stretch of their circumstances would afford. This resolution was strengthened, if not suggested, by his grandfather, a venerable seer of nearly fourscore years of age, who took great delight in conversing with his favourite grandchild, and encouraged in him that propensity to learning which soon became strong and apparent. The impressions made by this good old man, were the impressions of piety and religion; and, to the latest period of his subsequent life, Dr. Hunter never recalled his image to memory without paying the tribute of his warmest affections, and not unfrequently of his tears.

Having obtained all that Culross at that period probably could bestow, at the age of thirteen he was sent to the college of Edinburgh. In taking this little journey, an incident occurred which tends to shew at once the prevalent superstition of the times, and his early contempt of them.

On his arrival at the ferry, in order to cross the frith, the boat was about to set off with only one passenger, an old woman, well known round the whole country, under the name of Margaret Kidd, and dreaded and abhorred as being reputed a most dangerous witch. Contrary to the advice and entreaties of all his friends, who had accompanied him to the water-side, he seated himself in the boat, and was safely carried across with his companion. The old woman was struck with the behaviour of the young student, who conversed mildly with her; and her heart was affected by this first instance of human kindness that she had perhaps received for many years. On landing at Borrowstoness, she bade him farewell, and gave him her blessing, all the recompense she could make. "I am "called witch," said she, "but however that "may be, depend upon it an old woman's "blessing will do you no harm!" To the warm heart and enthusiastic mind of Henry Hunter, this blessing was like precious ointment on his head; and a very

little time convinced his friends that the witchcraft of Margaret Kidd had either not been exerted, or had totally failed in its effect.

At Edinburgh his proficiency must have been great, and his talents not a little conspicuous, since, at the age of seventeen, he was appointed tutor to Mr. Boswell, of Balmuto, still living, and one of the Lords of Session. His stay there, however, was but of short duration. Hearing that his father was taken violently ill, he did not hesitate a moment between interest and filial duty and affection, but, giving up his charge at Balmuto, repaired immediately to Culross. For four months he attended the bed of his sick parent, never quitting the apartment but when his place could be supplied by a brother, who also took his turn in this pious office. At the end of that period his father died, and having discharged the last duties to his remains, he did not return to Balmuto; but on receiving an offer to superintend the education of Lord Dundo-

nald's sons, he undertook the charge, and repaired to Culross Abbey. Here his time seems to have been happily occupied, he being at that period of life when the mind is still eager after instruction, and yet capable of communicating it to others. Of the advantages he himself derived from this situation, he appears to have been fully sensible, and strongly alludes to them in his sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Nicholson, in December, 1774. "One of the most infallible methods," says he, "of acquiring knowledge, of any kind, is to communicate "that which we already possess to others. "Whilst we teach, we necessarily learn; "while we study the illumination of our "hearers, the darkness of our own mind is "thereby dispelled." How long he staid with Lord Dundonald is uncertain. On the 2d of May, 1764, however, he received his license to preach the gospel, having passed the several trials before the Presbytery with great applause. Previous to this, his mind had long been agitated by the apprehensions of not proving

worthy of the sacred character he was about to assume; and at the age of nineteen he even formed the idea of relinquishing the advantages likely to be derived from his past religious studies, and of entering the army. The solicitations and encouragement of his friends, however, overcame his scruples, and induced him to adhere to his first resolution; yet that he always entertained a due sense of the nature and importance of the office of a clergyman, and of the dangers to be apprehended from the natural violence of his own passions, will be evident not only from many passages in his works, but also by the following extracts from his letters written about that period. "I am al-
"most insensibly brought to the most im-
"portant crisis of my life; am just about
"to throw the last stake for time, and for
"eternity. I am ashamed of having lived
"so long to no purpose—but still the
"question is what course am to I steer? I
"would despise a crown, had I the well
"grounded prospect of being a good mi-
"nister: this character always has been,

" and ever will be, the object of my high-
" est ambition. I have taken every pre-
" paratory step towards assuming it ; but
" now that it approaches my resolution
" melts. I have as little courage to stand
" still as to go back. And how shall I
" proceed, with all my imperfections on
" my head ?"—And again, " What ! will
" nothing rouse me to a sense of true ho-
" nour ? Shall I remain for ever a stupid,
" indolent, careless animal ? Have I not
" arguments strong as death to spur me
" on ? Is not the path to fame, to glory,
" to happiness, before me ? Oh, the exalt-
" ed pleasure of doing good—good of the
" highest order to mankind, to the no-
" blest, the immortal part of man ! Oh,
" the bright crown which awaits them
" who turn many to righteousness ! Oh,
" the inexpressible, the inconceivable
" delight of being able to say, ' Lo,
" here I am, and the souls which thou hast
" given me.' What a prospect is this ! a
" prospect sufficient to excite any thing
" but such a dull wretch as I am."—And
again, " I make no reflections on a wise

"and gracious Providence for ordering
"my lot thus—I am pleased—I am con-
"tent—at least I submit; it were, proba-
"bly, good for me to be even more crossed
"than I am. Am I not proud? Am I not
"presumptuous? Am I not giddy? Am
"I not vain? Do I not need to be discover-
"ed to myself in all my weakness, all my
"folly, all my deformity? Yes, surely, if
"I would wish for a cure for them. I
"have considered my own character, and
"find it amounts just to this—dulness and
"levity in almost equal proportions—a
"great deal of vanity with very little me-
"rit—something of the appearance of re-
"ligion, with nothing of the power of it—
"much sail, little ballast—play the fool
"this moment, repent and be ashamed of
"it the next, and act the same part over
"again the third. In the morning a mi-
"ser, at night a spendthrift—in a word,
"a compound of contradictions and ab-
"surdities. Is such an one as this fit to
"be a minister? No, not fit to live, and,
"alas! much more unfit to die!" About
the period of writing these letters, in or-

der to strengthen his religious feelings and repress his youthful levity, it was usual for him to frequent the church-yard, and meditate on the records of frail mortality, or to seek out the gloomiest recesses of the ancient abbey of Culross, called the Vaults; and endeavour, amid their mouldering walls, to impress on his mind the transitory nature of human grandeur.

Soon after, being licensed, he began to preach in public, and was always listened to with an unusual degree of interest and attention. The knowledge of his being appointed to preach at any church was sufficient to assemble a crowd of hearers. In a short time he was followed, admired, caressed, by all ranks; extolled as a preacher, and sought after for his conversation. Perhaps he was the first—he certainly was among the first of the Scottish clergymen of that part of the country, who united biblical knowledge and true religious zeal with real classical learning and taste. These distinct characters he preserved to the last of his life—many,

whose tempers led them to find no charms in his conversation, were yet converts to his doctrine—whilst others, whose ears were shut against religious tenets, listened with avidity to his private criticisms on literary topics, to anecdotes of his own life, recorded with peculiar felicity, or happy remarks on men and manners.

Dr. Hunter had been ordained little more than a year when he received the offer of the ministry to the chapel of ease of the West Kirk at Edinburgh, and shortly afterward that of the Laigh Kirk at Paisley, on the decease of Dr. Muir, who had officiated there for many years. These two offers, however, Dr. Hunter declined, having already the prospect of obtaining the Kirk of South Leith; which, though inferior in stipend to either of them, was yet more agreeable to him in other respects. Here he had first risen into celebrity, and, in consequence, had formed many friendships; and the respect for his public talents was increased by the knowledge of his private character. He was

accordingly unanimously chosen and ordained minister of South Leith on the 9th of January, 1766. In May following he married Miss Margaret Charters, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Charters, minister of Inverkeithing, a young lady to whom he had been attached for many years; and being now completely settled in Leith, he seems to have entertained no idea but that of passing the remainder of his life in his native country.

Not long after the birth of his first child, his grandfather died, a man from whom he appears to have received many important and early impressions, and for whom he always cherished a great affection. In one of his letters, Dr. Hunter thus writes: "A good part of the evening "I spent with my grandfather, whose " company I always delight in—he is with- " in a day or two of his eighty-fifth year— " what would I not give to be in his place " to-night—and yet he seems afraid of " death—is surrounded with much doubt- " ing and fearing. In what a condition am

"I then? Oh, how I blushed to observe "the knees of his stockings worn out and "out, and hear him talk of his own worth-"lessness, and complain of his deadness "and stupidity: how my heart melted "at the prayers he put up for me, and the "earnestness of his looks, and the ardour "with which he grasped my hand. How "I was stung with conscious brutality "when I heard him express his fond hopes "concerning me; and when I reflected "on the disappointment they are likely "to meet with if he lives much longer. "And yet there are a good many particu-"lars of his life which I think are re-"sembled by several of mine. I fain would "trace a likeness, and claim a nearer re-"lation than that of blood." And in another letter, after mentioning that his grandmother was thought to be dying, he says, "Though she be an old, a very old wo-"man, yet I cannot help being sensibly "affected with the thought of losing her; "especially when I consider what will be "the affliction of my poor grandfather "upon the loss of her. They were born the

" same year, within three or four months " of each other—were married in their " twenty-second or twenty-third year, and " have continued in that state for the " space of sixty-two or sixty-three years, " without the least cool of affection—on the " contrary, I lately heard my grandfather " say, that he loved his wife better that " day than the day he was married to " her. Such instances of conjugal affec- " tion are but rare ; I am therefore not " a little proud of owing my birth to it." Such instances of conjugal affection are indeed rare and worthy of being recorded, especially in an age when they are becoming every day more and more unusual; and Baucis and Philemon are mentioned as a tale before the flood.

After Dr. Hunter had resided about three years at Leith, curiosity prompted him to visit the great city, and his expectations, though previously highly raised, were not disappointed. " With all your " suppositions," says he, in one of his letters, " you can never conceive such a

"place as London—it is dangerous to "engage yourself to meals here, without "knowing where your inviter's house is— "for if you are not very cautious, you may "unthinkingly be engaged to breakfast as "it were at Edinburgh—to dine at Pres- "ton-Pans, to pass the evening at Cors- "torphine, and come back to Leith to "sleep." Whilst in London, Dr. Hunter preached regularly at several Scottish meeting-houses, particularly those of Swallow-street and London Wall. By the congregation of the latter, he was treated with a degree of attention and hospitality which he never afterwards forgot. Shortly after his return to Leith, he received a formal offer of the meeting in Swallow-street, which yielded at that time a stipend of two hundred pounds per annum, a sum more than double the amount of his income at South Leith. This, however, he declined; and privately declared to his most intimate friends, that nothing would induce him to quit his congregation at Leith but the possibility of obtaining the church at London Wall—so strong was the

attachment he had already conceived for the congregation there, and so friendly had been their conduct toward him whilst in London.

It so happened, that in little more than eighteen months afterwards the pulpit at London Wall became vacant by the death of the Rev. Robert Lawson, who had occupied it nearly twenty years; and shortly afterwards, Dr. Hunter received an unanimous invitation to supply his place. This offer coinciding with his former inclination, determined his resolution; yet, notwithstanding this presentient attachment, he did not separate from his congregation at South Leith without mutual regret, having constantly lived with them on the most friendly terms, and being equally loved and respected by them. Previous to his departure, he received an anonymous letter from London, advising him, in illiberal terms, not to quit Scotland; and assuring him that a violent opposition would be made to him in the church. This letter he immediately sent up to the elders of

London Wall informing them at the same time, that he could not think of leaving Leith until this matter was cleared up to him. They immediately made strict enquiry, and having detected and exposed the author, gave the Doctor every satisfaction. All difficulties being thus removed, he bade adieu to the congregation at Leith; and having repaired to the metropolis, entered on the charge of London Wall meeting-house on the 11th of August, 1771.

Dr. Hunter had now entered into another sphere; and the manners and habits of life with which he was to become acquainted varied essentially from those to which he had hitherto been accustomed. For a time his active mind found sufficient occupation in the duties of his ministry, and in viewing the wonderful contrast between a small shipping town, and the metropolis of the British empire. By degrees, however, he acquired more employment, and having determined to educate his own children, he chose, rather than solicited, a few pupils whom he could

himself superintend. He thus incorporated them with his family, and, in fact, always treated them as his children, ever retaining a lively interest in their welfare.

In 1784, Dr. Hunter published the two first volumes of Sacred Biography, a series of lectures on the lives of the most eminent characters recorded in the Bible. He had conceived the design of this biography when very young, and pursued it from time to time during the whole of his subsequent life. The work met with very great success, being equally original in the design, and masterly in the execution; and in consequence of the public favour, extended by degrees to six volumes. To these was finally added a seventh on the life of our Saviour. The Doctor proposed writing another volume on the same subject, which, if he had lived to accomplish, would have been the natural and proposed termination of his plan. This volume was the last of his writings, and evinces, that his mind had lost none of its powers

through the increasing infirmities of his body. It is, however, unnecessary to enlarge here upon the merits of the whole of this excellent work; a gentleman of literary acquirements and critical talents having undertaken the task of reviewing the writings of Dr. Hunter; suffice it to say, that he in general paid more attention to the excellence of his matter, than to the construction of his sentences —that he sought after ideas more than words, and endeavoured to impress conviction by the strength of his genius, rather than to engage a momentary attention by the elegance of his expressions.

Shortly after the publication of the two or three first volumes of this work, he accidentally met with a French edition of John Gasper Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy, and was struck with the boldness of the design, and the originality of thought and expression contained in them. Whatever opinions Dr. Hunter embraced, he embraced warmly. By degrees he became an enthusiast in the cause of Physiognomy

and of Lavater. He not only defended it as a system when attacked, but endeavoured in all companies to make converts to it as a science. In fine, he determined to translate the work into English; and having communicated his ideas and his enthusiasm to Mr. Thomas Holloway, an eminent engraver of his acquaintance, that gentleman readily undertook to provide the necessary plates. Mr. John Murray, bookseller, had the care of the printing; and the work thus allotted, was begun by all parties with great ardour.

Having translated sufficient to occupy the Printer and the Engraver for some time, Dr. Hunter determined upon paying a visit to Lavater at Zurich. The ardour with which he had taken up his cause in England, naturally communicated to his mind a sort of esteem and attachment toward him; and perhaps he hoped to derive from the conversation of the physiognomist a still greater knowledge of his plans than could be extracted from his works. In August, 1787, he accordingly

repaired to Zurich; but it does not appear that Lavater received his visit with that frankness and cordiality with which it was made. Dr. Hunter expected to have been received with more than ordinary kindness, by a man whose works he was about to introduce to the British public, in a style far superior to any in which they had hitherto appeared. Lavater, on the contrary, considered this English translation as likely to injure the sale of the French edition in which he was concerned, and scarcely knew how to act. His translator's frankness, however, by degrees overcame his scruples, and he finally unbosomed himself without reserve. In a letter from Bern, Dr. Hunter thus draws the portrait of Lavater, and describes his last interview with him: "I was detained "the whole morning by that strange, "wild, eccentric creature, Lavater, in va- "rious conversations. When once he is "set a going, there is no such thing as "stopping him, till he run himself out of "breath. He starts from subject to sub- "ject, flies from book to book, from

" picture to picture ; measures your nose,
" your eye, your mouth, with a pair of
" compasses ; pours forth a torrent of
" physiognomy upon you ; drags you for
" a proof of his dogma to a dozen of clo-
" sets, and unfolds ten thousand draw-
" ings ; but will not let you open your lips
" to propose a difficulty : crams a solu-
" tion down your throat, before you have
" uttered half a syllable of your objection.
" He is meagre as the picture of famine ;
" his nose and chin almost meet. I read
" him in my turn, and found little dif-
" ficulty in discovering amidst great ge-
" nius, unaffected piety, unbounded be-
" nevolence and moderate learning, much
" caprice and unsteadiness, a mind at
" once aspiring by nature, and grovelling
" through necessity, an endless turn to
" speculation and project—in a word, a
" clever, flighty, good natured, necessi-
" tous man. He did not conceal his
" dread of my English translation, as he
" thinks it will materially affect the sale
" of the third and fourth volumes of his
" French edition, one of which is ac-

" tually published, and the other in the " press."

On his return to England, the work was prosecuted with redoubled ardour, and on the 1st of January, 1789, the first number was published, in a style of elegance, both as to printing and engraving, to which the public was at that time but little accustomed. Indeed this work may be considered as among the very first of those expensive undertakings, which have since done so much honour to the artists and the public spirit of this country.

The unremitting application which Dr. Hunter paid to his share of the undertaking, and the execution of which depended entirely upon himself, enabled him to finish the translation long before the other parts of the work were ready for publication. He accordingly entered upon the translation of Euler's Letters to a German princess, a work which happily explains many of the most abstruse subjects

of philosophy in a clear and simple manner, but which did not appear till January, 1795. The assiduity with which Dr. Hunter prosecuted his literary labours, did not, however, either prevent or retard his exertions in the cause of benevolence and religion—for many years he had been a strenuous supporter of the society for propagating Christian Knowledge in the highlands and islands of Scotland; and on the 5th of August, 1790, he was elected secretary to the Corresponding Board of that Society in London, by a very great majority of the members present, at a general quarterly meeting held on that day. He had already for a long time officiated as chaplain to the Scottish Corporation, and it is certainly not assuming too much to say, that a very large portion of the property which speedily increased the funds of both these institutions was entirely owing to his exertions. Enthusiastic as he was in every thing which he undertook, he was doubly so in support of establishments formed for the diffusion of knowledge, and the alleviation of misery

and want. In the cause of both these charities, as his zeal was unbounded, and his abilities most conspicuous, so was his success proportionably great. Whatever opinion criticism may pass upon his writings, or however malignity may endeavour to heighten his failings, he has left in the records of these societies a lasting testimonial of his benevolence and religious zeal—a testimonial which criticism cannot censure, and which malignity dare not attack. In 1791, his eldest son, Samuel, who had been nine years in the service of the company in India, returned to England for the benefit of his health. In a short time, however, an opportunity offered of his going back over-land with dispatches to Lord Cornwallis. In this journey, Dr. Hunter accompanied him as far as Venice, in order as much as possible to hasten him, although he was well aware that other motives would be attributed to him. "I know," says he, in a letter from Turin, "that my present expedition will "be considered by some, in their igno- "rance, as a ramble of amusement. All "I shall at present say is, that there is not

"a person on earth who could provoke "me to such a degree as to induce me to "wish him the thousandth part of the "distress I have endured. I hope and be- "lieve that I have been discharging an "important though painful duty, and that "alone supports me." After leaving his father, the young man experienced nothing but sickness and misfortunes. In crossing the desert, he met with the most cruel detentions, and did not arrive in India at the period expected. His reception was such as might be due to error, but not to his motives and misfortunes: it sunk deep into his heart, and, joined to the fatigue he had undergone, his delicate state of health, and the climate in a short time caused his death. This was the first breach that the Doctor had experienced in his family since the death of his first-born who died in infancy, and he of course felt it deeply—alas! it was but the prelude to many more.

Euler's Letters having succeeded, the Doctor next engaged in the translation of The Studies of Nature by Bernardin St.

Pierre; an excellent work, though abounding in declamation, and prefaced by a theory of Tides, in opposition to that of Newton; in which the very facts on which he grounds his absurdities prove directly the contrary. This translation includes the well known story of Paul and Virginia, a truly beautiful and affecting tale, and was published in 1795, in which year also appeared two volumes of the Doctor's Miscellaneous Sermons, collected by himself, and accompanied by short accounts of the time and occasion of their being delivered. Exclusive of the merits of the sermons, these illustrations are in many instances highly interesting, and the addition to the seventh sermon "on Monumental Inscriptions, Funeral Sermons, and the Burial of the Dead," is peculiarly worthy of regard. "The treatment of the dead," says he, "is no easy undertaking, unless the heart speak in the funeral train, speak from the pulpit, speak on the marble; may no unfeeling varlet be permitted to lay out my poor remains; no stupid panegyrist put me a second

"time to death, by mangling my me-
"mory; and not a stone tell where I
"lie."

Still continuing the work of translation, in 1796 he published sermons by Saurin, in one volume, a task for which he was peculiarly qualified; Saurin being a preacher whom he had long and closely studied. Early in the following year he lost his eldest surviving son Henry, who had been bred to the bar, and who was now taken away, after a lingering illness, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. Although his death was to have been expected from the delicacy of his constitution, and the nature of his disorder, which was consumptive, so prone are we to flatter ourselves into the belief of what we fondly hope, that the shock was almost as great as if the event had been sudden and unexpected. He was a young man of the most promising talents; of a cool and solid judgment, joined to mild manners and a feeling heart. His knowledge of his profession, even without

taking into consideration his delicate constitution, was respectable; his eloquence calm, and flowing in an uninterrupted stream; his general literary acquirements extensive, and his writings, of which many specimens remain, at once elegant and nervous. His abilities and his disposition alike contributed to make his loss felt, and he was mourned for as a son, a companion, and a friend.

In January, 1797, the Rev. John Fell began a course of lectures on the evidence of christianity, which, by permission of the Doctor and the Elders, he delivered on the first Sunday of every month at the church of London Wall. The design being interrupted by the death of Mr. Fell, Dr. Hunter was requested to finish what had been so worthily begun. He accordingly completed the lectures to twelve, the number originally proposed by Mr. Fell, and in 1798, published the whole in one volume, having previously published his funeral sermon, containing a well writ-

ten sketch of his life. If we reflect on the domestic losses which the Doctor had lately undergone, it will be evident that the beautiful commencement of the twelfth lecture, was drawn from his own paternal feelings. The discourse is on the resurrection, and he thus introduces the subject.—"When a beloved object is removed from us by death, we resign it slowly and reluctantly. The voice which has for many years vibrated delightfully on our ear, we are unwilling to believe is for ever silenced; we hang over the tremulous lips for a while, expecting when they shall move again, and utter the sounds which used to kindle the soul to rapture. I have seen my friend asleep. The animated orbs, which told me quick as thought what he felt and understood, underwent an eclipse. I saw on his countenance the image of death, but rejoiced in the temporary suspension, because I knew it was going to restore invigorated animation and intelligence. But that was the sleep of death. These

" eyes are to open no more. I must 'bury
" my dead out of my sight.' Here nature
" leaves me to mourn; and philosophy
" offers a cold consolation which my heart
" rejects. Persuaded at length that I
" have lost what I loved, I purchase with
" Abraham a possession of a burying
" place; I erect with Jacob a pillow over
" my Rachael's grave; I inscribe with
" David on the monumental urn, sacred
" to the memory of my Jonathan: 'Lovely
" and pleasant in life, and in death undi-
" vided.' But still I am not at rest—was
" that blessing bestowed upon me only to
" be taken away? Was my cup thus
" sweetened to render this infusion more
" bitter? What is left, but that my grey
" hairs descend with sorrow to the grave?
" —Till 'life and immortality were brought
" to light by the gospel,' this was the sad
" estimate of human existence; and a lit-
" tle cavity in the earth, or the ashes re-
" maining from a funeral pile, settled the
" account between the parent and the
" child, between the husband and the wife,
" between a man and his brother. But

" now the dark valley is illuminated: the
" king of terrors is disarmed; my brother,
" my friend, my child, is not dead, but
" sleepeth. Let us also go and die with
" him. It is the glory of christianity, af-
" ter having instructed, regulated, sweet-
" ened the life that now is, to disclose a
" continuation of being which knows no
" period."

These views were to be impressed still more deeply, and these consolations rendered still more necessary to Doctor Hunter by the loss of his elder daughter Christian, who died on the 30th of October 1798. She had been passing a few weeks with a friend near the sea coast, when she unfortunately broke a blood-vessel, which brought on a rapid decline, and terminated in her dissolution at the early age of twenty-four. Few young women ever united such sweetness of manners with a mind so cultivated, and a countenance so attractive. Constantly mild and gentle in her deportment, yet warm in her feelings, she was ever active to discharge the

offices of a dutiful daughter, a most affectionate sister, a warm friend. Well informed without pedantry, mild without weakness, her conversation possessed the happy medium of her manners and habits. No forced tear was dropped over her remains; no venal flowers were wreathed around her tomb: her family wept the loss of one of its dearest ties; the circle of her acquaintance lamented the deprivation of one of its fairest ornaments.

In 1800, the feelings of Dr. Hunter again received a severe shock from the loss of his son Thomas, who had left England on a mercantile speculation, and died at Montego Bay, in the island of Jamaica, within eight months from the time of his departure, at the age of twenty-three. It was sufficient to be once in the company of this excellent young man, to see the nature of his disposition, but it required a long acquaintance fully to comprehend the extent of his mind. Though "humorous as winter, he had ever a tear "for pity, and a hand open as day for

"melting charity." The first and last trait in his character was frankness, and a frankness that pressed itself upon you as it were, and displayed a mind not merely incapable of practising, but even of conceiving dissimulation. When he shook you by the hand, his open and manly countenance was a sufficient security that reliance might be placed in him to the utmost. To a disposition thus frank, he added a heart alive to all the best feelings of friendship and affection, and a strong and cultivated mind. His chief delight was in humorous subjects, but he could touch the pathetic with no unskilful hand, and sometimes struck the chord of the true sublime. His many compositions, which have appeared in various periodical publications, and still more, those which remain in the hands of his family, evince the extent and variety of his talents; but those who knew him, can alone appreciate the noble and generous feelings of his heart. The deep regret which even strangers have expressed by letters on the occasion of his death, and the last honours paid

to his remains in a distant clime, may serve to shew the impression which he made on the slightest acquaintance. He has been lamented abroad by those who scarcely knew him—he has been wept and mourned for at home by those to whom he was most dear, and over whom, had it been their fate to fall, and his to survive, he would have shed tears equally bitter and equally unavailing.

These repeated shocks sunk deep into the heart of Dr. Hunter, and gradually undermined his constitution. In vain he called to his aid, those consolations of religion which he had so often administered to others. They assuaged but could not remove his sorrows, which produced a more baneful effect from the silence of their operations. He repined not, and scarcely complained, but endeavoured to comfort the remaining branches of his family by exhortation and advice, and to occupy his own mind by application to his literary labours. In 1800, he accordingly published a translation of Cas-

though every day growing weaker, and being advised to remove to Bristol, he departed for that place on the 18th of October. Previous to his departure, he sent a short letter to his daughter, which as it was the last he ever wrote, may be interesting to his friends, and is here presented.

" MY DEAR AGNES, " Bath, 17th of October, 1802.

" I have to acknowledge the re-
" ceipt of your letter of yesterday, and its
" contents safe. I am so debilitated as
" to be incapable of every manner of
" exertion. To-morrow I proceed to
" Bristol; if I feel not immediate relief, I
" shall return home, and languish and
" die at my own house. Augusta Ste-
" phen has behaved to me in the kindest
" manner, as likewise has Mr. Jay, and
" many others.

" I am unable to sit longer, and must
" go and lie down.

" Yours always,

" HENRY HUNTER."

Shortly after receipt of this letter, his daughter and only surviving son in England, repaired to Bristol, where they arrived on the 24th of October. Their presence, although he had constantly avoided expressing a wish to that effect, was as high a gratification as his exhausted state would admit of receiving: but neither change of air, or medicine, or the presence of his children, could arrest the silent but rapid progress of decay. Being completely exhausted, he died without pain on the 27th of October. The body was brought to London, and interred on the 6th of November, in the burying-ground of Bunhill Fields, where his son Henry and his beloved daughter Christian also rest. An appropriate oration was delivered at the grave by the Rev. James Steven, minister of Crown Court, and the funeral sermon was preached at London Wall, on Sunday the 7th of November, by the Rev. William Nicol, of Swallow Street.

A monument is about to be erected to the memory of Dr. Hunter, an inscription for which has been very kindly furnished

by the Rev. W. B. Collyer, of Peckham: in the persuasion that a perusal of it will be gratifying to the readers of this Work, a copy of it is here inserted:

BENEATH
This Pillar, raised by the hand of Friendship,
slumber the mortal Remains of the Rev.
HENRY HUNTER, D.D.
who through a long Life, deemed by those who knew him, alas! too short,
served with unwearied assiduity the Interests of Religion and Literature.
In him, to Talents the most illustrious, and a Mind the most capacious, were united
Energy of Disposition; Elegance of Manners; Benevolence of Heart; and Warmth of Affection.
In the Hearts of those who were blessed with his Friendship,
is preserved
the most sacred and inviolable Attachment;
but his best Eulogium, and his most durable Memorial,
will be found in his Writings;
THERE he has an Inscription which the Revolution of Years cannot efface—
a Tablet, which Time can neither injure nor destroy.
When the nettle shall skirt the base of this Monument,
and the moss obliterate this feeble testimonial of Affection;
when finally, sinking under the pressure of Years,
This Pillar
shall tremble, and fall, over the dust it covers,
HIS Name shall be transmitted to Generations unborn!
READER!
thus far suffer the weakness of affectionate Remembrance
where no adequate Eulogium *can* be pronounced,
and when no other Inscription was necessary to perpetuate his Memory, than
HENRY HUNTER:
Thirty-one Years he was Pastor of the SCOTS CHURCH, LONDON WALL;
and on Wednesday the Twenty-seventh of October, 1802,
left his Family, and his Church
to deplore, but never to retrieve,
his loss;
and silently took his flight to Heaven,
in the Sixty-second Year
of his Age.

Having thus given the outlines of the life of Dr. Hunter, there still remains the more difficult and more delicate task of presenting a summary of his character and genius. Some estimate may indeed be formed of both, from a perusal of his writings, which, however, are still better calculated to afford a just notion of his abilities, than of his disposition. He was a man of uncommon warmth of heart, and of quick and powerful feelings, joined to a mind naturally energetic and commanding. Whatever he felt, he felt deeply: whatever he attempted, he attempted with the whole power of his mind. He knew not what a half feeling, or a half measure meant. The object which he took up, engaged him for the time, almost to the exclusion of every other, and from the nature of his mind, that object was never of a trivial or paltry nature. He detested every action savouring in the least of meanness, and could rather have borne with the infirmities of a great mind, than with the petty vices of a little one. His views being constantly bent on some

important or interesting object, left him little, or no inclination to turn them toward others, to him of less consequence. Hence a complete disregard of money, except to answer some present purpose, either of necessity, or charity: from the great benevolence of his heart, it accordingly happened not unfrequently that if, even when in great want of money, he received a sum more than sufficient to answer the demand of the moment, the remainder was always ready to be shared with the first child of want that appeared. As he despised half measures in his other actions, so he deprecated them in his charities. When he gave, he gave *all*. The objects of his benevolence often departed from him richer than himself, and left him to seek from friendship that assistance which he had bestowed through the irresistible impulses of a warm heart. With such dispositions it will naturally be supposed that his attachments were particularly warm to those more immediately around him. Yet although he delighted above all in the company of his children, no

person ever took shelter beneath his roof, even for a short time, without becoming an object of his regard, and sharing in his friendship.

In the allotment of time he was exact; in performing a promise even to the smallest engagement, he was most punctual, and would rather put himself to inconvenience, than run the risk of trifling with the time of others: whatever depended on himself, was sure to be performed; and often, through his means, when it depended on others: a grand axiom in all his actions was, that whatever good work he began, should never be relinquished, till completed.

Although in conversation he was uncommonly lively and agreeable, yet Dr. Hunter had not the smallest turn for raillery, or what is termed repartee: perhaps in the whole course of his life, he never made an attempt at a joke; yet what may appear extraordinary, he possessed a keen relish of those social quali-

fications when innocently exerted by others, and was an admirable judge of humour, although he possessed none himself.

As a pulpit orator, his abilities were of the very first class. If he spoke to the understanding, the admirable division of his subject enabled every hearer to grasp his meaning, and conclusions drawn with almost logical precision overwhelmed the doubts of the most ingenious caviller. If he addressed the feelings, the earnestness of his manner added a double interest to his pathetic exhortations, and carried conviction to the coldest heart. His delivery was uniformly solemn and distinct, not calculated to slide gently into a fashionable ear, but admirably adapted to the general nature of his discourses, to engage profound attention, to awaken deep reflection, and alarm the soul sinking into deceitful security or impenitence. Rich in ideas, and profound and accurate in his observations, he disdained nothing more than to hunt after high sounding

words which charm the ear and deceive the understanding without touching the heart. It may be truly said with respect to the general effect of his preaching, that

"Fools who came to scoff remained to pray."

In all characters, however good or great, there must be imperfections. The energy of his mind carried him to a misplaced inflexibility and impetuosity on points of little moment, and the warmth of his feelings inclined him, perhaps, at times too strongly to the pleasures of society: yet were even the coldest and severest judge to examine these imperfections, when he reflected that the first was only the partial and temporary perversion of a great quality, and that from the same source as the second, sprung the disposition to wipe away the tear from the eye of the widow and the orphan, he would perhaps hesitate to condemn. But if, leaving partial views of his character, this same severe judge were to consider him as possessing a heart sincere, benevolent, generous, pious, and

affectionate, a mind firm, capacious, decided, and indefatigable, he would then indeed, in strict justice, be eager to applaud. In short, without speaking too highly, it may confidently be affirmed, that although one man may be found to fill his place as a minister, a second, as a man of active benevolence and charity, a third, as an instructor of youth, and a fourth, as a literary character; yet we must not expect to see a man speedily arise capable of sustaining all these various characters, and of making *one* of them equal to Henry Hunter.

In his person Dr. Hunter was tall, slender, and rather narrow in the shoulders and chest: in walking, he generally kept his eyes fixed on the ground at a little distance before him. His features were strongly marked, and indicative of a decided character; his eyes grey, and capable of expressing all the emotions of his soul; and his whole physionomy characteristic even to a common observer, of a mind not cast in an ordinary mould.

DR. HENRY HUNTER! a pupil, perhaps, the best beloved of thy pupils, erects this frail memorial to thy virtues: returned from foreign climes, he found thy pulpit clothed in black, and thy family still in tears. In the preceding pages, "the heart *has* spoken," nor has an "unfeeling hand dared to dress out thy "poor remains." Permit this last handful of friendly earth to be scattered over thy tomb; and may he who attempts this pious office, ever remain mindful of thy precepts and emulative of thy virtues.

The foregoing pages had been just prepared for the press, when an event took place, which may very properly close this narrative: namely, the death of Mrs. Hunter; those to whom this work will be the most valuable, will not be displeased, that a small tribute of respect is here paid to her memory. Those who best knew her, esteemed her most; few persons have been called on to sustain so trying a part in life as hers was, and none ever sustained it with greater fortitude

and magnanimity. She never beheld, unmoved, the sufferings of a fellow creature: she never wilfully gave pain to a human being: she was ardent and unvarying in her friendship: she never created an enemy: her lessons were those of virtue and religion: her conduct was the pattern of what she taught: she was called repeatedly to the mournful duty of closing the eyes of her beloved children, and never was there a more tender affectionate mother; but she stood by the dying bed, and spoke peace and comfort to the parting spirit: her mind was strong in that faith which triumphs over death and the grave; but though no tear dropt from her eye, though no outward sign of grief appeared, the many severe afflictions which she had sustained, preyed upon her inward frame, and finally brought on a complaint which terminated in her dissolution in less than a year and a half from its first attack. She was in church on the morning of Sunday the 24th of July 1803, but was taken suddenly ill in the evening, and early in the morning of

the 25th entered the mansions of eternal peace: the transition from the sleep of nature to the sleep of death was imperceptible. She has rejoined those whom she loved and mourned for here, in that blessed world where "sorrow and sighing" shall never enter.

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

WRITINGS

OF THE LATE

REV. HENRY HUNTER, D.D.

AS the present publication is necessarily rendered the last by the decree of Providence which has cut short the life of the author, it has been thought proper to subjoin to his Life a summary account of his several Writings, both for the benefit of his particular friends who may wish to have a complete set of his works, and also for the sake of his own memory; as the world in general might otherwise have not an opportunity to know how much he had devoted his pen to the service of mankind, and how valuable a legacy he has bequeathed them.

Few authors have been more successful in attracting the attention of the public by their first publications than Dr. Hunter. His *Sacred Biography* no sooner appeared than it was very generally read. The novelty of the plan, and the elegance of the execution, contributed to raise a degree of curiosity which is seldom excited by the productions of the pulpit. Printed sermons, divested as they are of all the aids of voice and gesture, which give them force and animation in the pulpit, are usually looked upon as common-place essays on trite subjects; and the idea that it is impossible to say any thing new on a theme that has been so many thousand times discussed, causes many an instructive volume of sermons to be left to moulder on the shelves of the bookseller who has had the boldness to publish them. Something uncommon, either in language or in method, is absolutely necessary to overcome this apathy; and both these qualities claimed the public attention to the Sacred Biography. The style was marked by an animation of sen-

timent, and a glow of fancy, which are never found in the works of a common mind; and the discourses, instead of assuming the hacknied form of essays, appeared in the interesting and entertaining form of Biography. Dr. Hunter was not one of those school theologians who shut themselves up in their closets, and expect to find a knowledge of human nature, and the art of improving and reforming mankind, in the quaint and obscure writings of authors, who drew on their crude and uncultivated imaginations for that information which can only be derived from experience. He mixed with society; he acquired a knowledge of the human heart from observation; and the acuteness of his own sensibility made him readily perceive the most proper means of working on the affections of others. Example he well knew to be on all occasions more effectual than mere precept: he knew this to be particularly the case in religious matters, where it is often pleaded as an excuse for neglect, that the precept is too perfect for human nature to attempt its

execution. In his Sacred Biography he therefore turns those characters which are preserved in the scriptures to the purpose for which they were certainly designed, of enforcing the doctrines of religion by examples. The numerous occasions which the lives of those distinguished in the sacred writings present, of bringing the precepts of religion directly home to the feelings of individuals, of painting in affecting colours the wretched consequences of vice, of stimulating the mind to the most elevated exertions of virtue, of shewing the pleasure which results from the exercise of the milder affections of the heart, and the serene happiness which never fails to flow from a consciousness of being beloved by mankind, and approved in the sight of heaven: such occasions were peculiarly fitted to give scope to the sensibility and fancy of our author; and we have rarely to complain of his having omitted to profit by them. It is his peculiar praise in this work, that he has introduced frequent descriptions, innumerable moral precepts, and all the essential doctrines of religion, with-

out fatiguing the attention: he never omits an occasion of deducing an useful lesson from the character he is describing, yet still the agent is kept in sight, and the interest of the narrative preserved. The Sacred Biography may be justly characterised as exhibiting religion in the most attractive form—religion teaching by examples.

The reception of this work corresponded to the design and the execution. The two volumes which were at first published quickly ran through two editions. A new edition was called for, and Dr. Hunter, in compliance with the repeated solicitations of his friends, enlarged this third edition by three other volumes.

Hitherto the Sacred Biography comprehended only those of the patriarchs from Adam to Moses, whose lives afforded the most ample scope for remark and application. In the delineation of these, few of the great or even the minuter relations of life had entirely escaped observation. There was, however, one part of society

to whom the duties enforced by the example of the patriarchs did not so directly apply. There are virtues peculiar to the female sex which cannot be deduced from the example of men: our author therefore added a sixth volume in which these are delineated in the characters of Deborah, Ruth, and Hannah, women who were rendered illustrious by different qualities, yet all remarkably calculated for patterns of imitation. To this volume of the Sacred Biography, if to any, we should be inclined to give the preference. The advantages which women enjoy under the christian dispensation, the retiring virtues for which they ought to be peculiarly distinguished, the important part which belongs to them in promoting the happiness of their husbands, and in the education of their offspring; these circumstances are painted in a manner too glowing and impressive not to produce the best effect on the hearts of the female readers.

About ten years after the publication of this sixth volume, a seventh was added, containing the history of Jesus Christ,

This was a subject which, as our author justly observes in his preface, could not be exhausted in a single volume, or indeed in any number of volumes, as every action and precept of our Saviour, of itself, afforded an opportunity of expatiating on some important branch of morality. Our author has chosen the only course which could be pursued to give a general view of such an extensive subject in a small compass; he has pitched upon such parts of Christ's character as exhibit in the most striking point of view the spirit and tendency of his religion.

The Sacred Biography fixes the standard of Dr. Hunter's reputation as an author. From its length, and the variety of subjects which it contains, his style and genius are there exhibited in every different attitude. The peculiar characteristics of his manner are distinctly marked throughout. The improvement of his hearers in the common intercourse of life is always preferred to acquiring for himself the praise of a profound theologian. Controversy he rarely touches upon; but seems more

anxious to induce his hearers to confirm their practice to those tenets which, as christians, they already professed to believe. He endeavours to excite attention by engaging the imagination; he strives to produce his effect by impressing the heart. It might be said, that at times his style is more adapted to actual delivery than to perusal in the closet; that his bold figures and warm exclamations, which produced such an effect when accompanied by his impressive manner, are in danger of not equally carrying along with them the cool and collected reader.

Besides the Sacred Biography, Dr. Hunter has given to the public several other specimens of his public eloquence; and although the former work, both from its size and plan, certainly deserves as a whole to be considered as his principal performance, yet some pieces occur in his other volumes of sermons, which in correctness and elegance of execution might be accounted his master-pieces. Those to which we particularly allude are to be found in a collection of sermons in two

volumes, which he published in 1795. These discourses had almost all been previously printed in a separate form. They had been written for particular occasions, for the most part, to commemorate the anniversaries of various charitable institutions; and had been given to the public at the request of the societies before whom they had been delivered. It is natural to suppose, that pieces prepared for public occasions of this sort would be finished with particular care: and our author informs us in his preface, that he had availed himself of the remarks of those who had read the sermons in a detached state, as well as of the observations which experience had suggested to himself, to give the collection to the public in the most improved state possible. These two volumes may therefore be looked upon as perhaps the most correct specimens of his pulpit eloquence.

There is, however, another circumstance which ought still more forcibly to call the attention of Dr. Hunter's friends and admirers to this collection. In his pre-

face, he says, " I have endeavoured to " diversify and enliven my several sub- " jects, by affixing short memoirs, anec- " dotes, and illustrations, respecting the " persons, institutions, and events which " gave occasion to their original discussion " and publication. If the book survive " me, it will inform those who may feel " any interest in my memory, with what " persons I lived and acted, in what ser- " vices I was occasionally employed, and " what train of thought I was consequent- " ly led to pursue." To those who wish to be acquainted with the author's real character and private sentiments, these volumes are thus rendered invaluable. In a sermon intended to convey religious instruction, and written with a natural impression of awe in the mind arising from the very nature of the subject, his private sentiments and feelings had little opportunity of being displayed. But when he sits down to record the occasions on which his discourses were written, when he recalls the situations in which he was then placed, the friends of his youth with whom he conversed, with whom he enjoy-

ed opening life, and whose approbation gave a relish to public applause; when his mind by reflection is again roused with the eager desire of honest fame, or elevated with the glowing sentiments of benevolence which he then felt, enforced, and practised: the whole soul of our author is poured out before us; we forget the preacher, and we converse with the man. It is in the anecdotes and memoirs annexed to the discourses, that we have the real character and sentiments of Dr. Hunter delineated with even more accuracy than if he had written a formal life of himself. The ardent affection with which he speaks of the scenes of his youth, and his native country, will readily be pardoned by those who reflect, that prejudices of this sort (if prejudices they may be called) are usually strongest in minds of the greatest sensibility. Annexed to the second sermon of the first volume we have a biographical sketch of an early friend, which cannot fail to interest even those who had no acquaintance with either the author or his subject. If this sketch cannot be called a finished compo-

sition, if friendship appear at times to give importance to trifles which others might have overlooked, still it possesses in no small degree that peculiar charm which places the life of Savage at the head of our English Biography.

Besides these anecdotes and memoirs, which tend to throw so much light on Dr. Hunter's character and sentiments, this collection is further enriched by a particular account of several benevolent institutions of great utility in London. *The Scottish Corporation, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and the Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor*, were charitable establishments in which the author felt his benevolence peculiarly interested: his description of them is therefore marked with that peculiar glow of feeling and disinterested humanity which must tend powerfully to excite others to the support of these excellent institutions. Generosity is the noble characteristic of the English temper: it was a trait well calculated to fire the sensibi-

lity of Dr. Hunter's breast to enthusiasm: he speaks of it with rapture, and owns with candour and gratitude, that the wants and distresses of even his own more immediate countrymen looked for relief chiefly to English munificence.

A series of lectures on the evidences of christianity had been undertaken by Mr. Fell, an eminent dissenting minister, at the request of many friends of great respectability. The infirmities of declining health, however, pressed hard on that worthy man, and with the fourth lecture his theological labours ended. After his death, the same gentlemen requested Dr. Hunter to complete a series which had been begun with much utility; and this task he accomplished so highly to their satisfaction, that they earnestly intreated the publication of the whole. The four first lectures of the volume are the work of Mr. Fell; the other eight were added by Dr. Hunter. On the merits of these lectures, the public voice has already decided. They quickly passed through three editions; and many judges have

been at a loss to decide whether the preference is due to them or to the Sacred Biography. The manner in which the evidences of christianity are treated in these volumes is popular: they are addressed rather to the great body of the people than to the learned, and are on that very account, perhaps, better calculated to promote a general belief of the truth of our religion.

The volumes at present offered to the public close the list of his printed discourses. Imperfections may no doubt be discovered in them: some of these posthumous sermons were written in haste, others were never revised, none of them received the author's finishing touch, nor were indeed at all designed for publication. These circumstances, however, with the candid, will serve to excuse many blemishes; and those who have read and admired Dr. Hunter's former works, will, perhaps, be apt to overlook some imperfections in the present, and rather to judge of them by what they would have been, had they received the final correc-

are extremely characteristic of the author, and as they are so very different from the usual strain of funeral eulogiums. Instead of disgusting by fulsome and exaggerated praise, they speak a mind really affected with the scene before it. The style is simple as it ought to be; and the reflections such as are calculated to render the solemn event profitable to the hearers. Nothing, in short, is said which the spirit of the deceased, had it been capable of listening, would have wished unsaid. These short addresses, it is to be remarked, were spoke over the graves of the deceased in place of the English funeral service. The uncommon elegance of that service he with every other person acknowledged: the reasons, however, which he gives against its indiscriminate use, may, to many unprejudiced persons, appear to carry along with them much weight. In an appendix subjoined to the end of the first volume of that collection of sermons which we have noticed above, we find the following sentiments on this subject.

"Were there no greater danger to "morals than what arises from the indis- "criminate profusion of praise, in ex- "travagant epitaphs, and injudicious fu- "neral harangues, the practice might be "left to be cured by the pity and for- "bearance of the benevolent, and the "sneer of the sarcastic and malignant; "but there is real and known danger to "both morals and religion from a solemn "and important branch of the public ser- "vice of our established church. The bu- "rial-service, so powerfully impressive, is in "one respect faulty, and the more, that it "*is* so powerfully impressive. The body of "every one, without distinction, is consign- "ed to the grave in sure and certain hope "of the resurrection to eternal life. By "whom, it may be asked, is this glorious "hope in every case entertained? By the "worthy clergyman who reads the ser- "vice? Alas, he knew nothing of the "party, in innumerable instances, till he "came to the church-yard to *do his duty*, "as it is called: perhaps he well knew "the deceased to have lived and died a

" profligate; has a thousand times la-
" mented his impenitence, and looked for-
" ward with fear and trembling to the
" hour of dissolution, which was to hurry
" him into the presence of a righteous
" Judge. Is this hope expressed by the
" mourners or spectators? They are often
" precisely in the same state with the
" minister; they know nothing that can
" serve as a ground of such hope; or they
" know too much to be consistent with it.
" Did the man himself live and die in this
" blessed hope, and is the voice of it now
" issuing from his tomb? We trust this
" is the case with myriads, and 'blessed
" are the dead that die in the Lord.'
" But are there not others—who lived
" 'without God in the world,' and ex-
" pired without hope; expired, it may be,
" setting at nought the faith and hope of
" the gospel, as 'a cunningly devised fa-
" ble?'

" In North-Britain the dead are con-
" signed to the grave in solemn and pro-
" found silence. And, except in the case of

"eminent public character, or of distin-
"guished excellence, no funeral eulogium
"is pronounced from the pulpit."

We have thus taken a short view of Dr. Hunter's original works: It now remains to consider those writings which are indeed supposed to have a less necessary connection with genius, but which, if we estimate the value by the rarity of excellence, require as great a degree of talents to be well executed as original composition. To *do* a foreign work into English (according to a very appropriate phrase formerly applied to translation) is indeed a matter of no great difficulty, and may, with a moderate knowledge of the language, and the assistance of a dictionary, be easily accomplished. To transfuse the meaning, the spirit, and the manner of an author from one language into another, is, however, a very different thing. It requires a complete knowledge of the subject on which the author treats, a thorough acquaintance with both the language from which the translation is taken and that into which it is made, as well as a correspondence of

sentiments and feelings between the author and the translator. Dr. Hunter's natural sensibility particularly fitted him for attaining the last, and, perhaps, most essential as well as rarest qualification; and his choice fortunately fell upon authors whose sentiments were entirely in unison with the bent of his own mind. Few will doubt of his qualifications to present the *Studies of Nature* to the English reader in all their native animation, who read the following passage at the commencement of his preface to the translation: "A "man, who has himself derived pleasure "or instruction from the perusal of a book, "naturally wishes to have these advan- "tages communicated to others; for we "presume that what has singularly affect- "ed ourselves, is likely to produce a simi- "lar impression on the rest of mankind. "I have read few performances with more "complete satisfaction, and with greater "improvement, than the *Studies of Na- "ture;* in no one have I found the useful "and the agreeable more happily blended. "What work of science displays a more "sublime theology, inculcates a purer

"morality, or breathes a more ardent "and more expansive philanthropy? *Saint* "*Pierre* has enabled me to contemplate "the universe with other eyes, has furnish- "ed new arguments to combat atheism, "has established, beyond the power of "contradiction, the doctrine of an uni- "versal providence, has excited a warmer "interest in favour of suffering humanity, "and has disclosed sources, unknown be- "fore, of moral and intellectual enjoy- "ment. Unfettered by system, unawed "by authority, he looks immediately into "nature; he observes, he thinks, he rea- "sons for himself, and teaches his reader "thus to observe, think, and reason." A translator capable of entering with such enthusiasm into the sentiments of his author, and capable of describing his feelings so eloquently, could scarcely have produced a bad, or even an indifferent translation. The public reception it has met with is the best evidence of its being a good copy of the original, as such an author as St. Pierre could not have long wanted a good translator. Dr. Hunter ardently desired to see or correspond with

this extraordinary man, in order that he might thus have an opportunity of making the translation as faithful a transcript of his sentiments as possible. This was however prevented by the implacable hostility which then reigned between France and England.

Let it not be supposed, that Dr. Hunter, when he expressed such admiration of the Studies of Nature, was at all blind to the whim and sophistry with which the theories it contains are blended. It was not the theories, but their application, to which he looked; and he was ready to pardon some speculative errors in a book, whose aim is to awaken benevolence and piety.

As we have already observed, the sensibility of Dr. Hunter's temper made him readily enter with enthusiasm into the sentiments of the authors he admired, and thus qualified him in a particular manner for the duties of a translator. The novel, eccentric, and ingenious speculations of Lavater in a particular manner attracted his attention. The glowing sentiments of

benevolence and piety with which they are interspersed had no small effect in rendering our author an enthusiastic partisan of theories, which, like Lavater himself, form a curious compound of ingenuity, goodness, and whim. It appears that he undertook the translation of the work on physiognomy chiefly with a view to propagate opinions which he himself had strongly imbibed. The translation is consequently marked with all that glow which actuated the author's mind while engaged in it. Lavater's expressions, from the eccentricity of his ideas, are often extremely obscure and indefinite, and, therefore, with difficulty rendered into another language. Dr. Hunter appears to have bestowed considerable pains in decyphering his author's meaning, and often succeeds in rendering the ideas more definite than in the original. In order to prevent mistakes in this undertaking, and to render the English translation as complete as possible, he paid a visit to Switzerland for the sole purpose of procuring information from Lavater. The conti-

nual pressure of indigence had, however, nearly extinguished all the noble feelings of that extraordinary genius, and instead of being elevated on hearing that his fame was to be extended, and his work presented to the English nation in a form more elegant than had almost been hitherto seen, poor Lavater heard with chagrin of an undertaking which might possibly diminish his profits from the sale of the French edition in which he had a share. Some information, however, was at length procured, which greatly conduced to the improvement of the translation. The reception which this splendid work has met with from the public, in spite of subsequent translations by men of some name, may be adduced as one strong testimony to its merit. A negligence and inequality of style may at times be objected; but when we consider the variety of the matter, and the inequality of the original, we may be apt to conclude that the translation would perhaps have lost in simplicity and truth what it might have gained in more minute correctness.

As Dr. Hunter always chose his works for translation by the impression they made on his feelings, the letters of Euler to a German Princess naturally fell under his design. The preface prefixed by the translator to this work is particularly valuable, as it describes his ideas of education. As the book was originally intended for the instruction of a female, he takes occasion to enforce strongly the propriety of educating women as if they were intelligent beings, and to expose the folly of imagining that intellectual improvement should tend to unfit a woman for the ordinary occasions of life. For the benefit of those female readers who have not had an opportunity of perusing the preface alluded to, we shall extract one remarkable passage. After describing the illiberal and supercilious manner in which women were formerly treated, he observes—"They are "now treated as rational beings, and so- "ciety is already the better for it. And "wherefore should the terms *female* and "*philosophy* seem a ridiculous combina- "tion? Wherefore preclude to a woman "any source of knowledge to which her

" capacity and condition in life entitle her
" to apply? It is cruel and ungenerous
" to expose the frivolity of the sex, after
" reducing it to the necessity of being silly
" and frivolous. Cultivate a young wo-
" man's understanding, and her person
" will become, even to herself, only a
" secondary concern: let her time be
" filled up in the acquisition of useful and
" attainable knowledge, and then she will
" cease to be a burden to herself and
" every body about her; make her ac-
" quainted with the world of nature, and
" the world of art will no longer delude
" her. The time, I trust, is at hand, when
" the Letters of Euler, or some such book,
" will be daily on the breakfasting table
" in the parlour of every female academy
" in the kingdom; and when a young
" woman, while learning the useful arts
" of pastry and plain-work, may likewise
" be acquainting herself with the phases
" of the moon, and the flux and reflux of
" the tides. And I am persuaded she
" may thrum on the guitar, or touch the
" keys of the harpsichord, much more
" agreeably both to herself and others, by

"studying a little the theory of sound. "I have put the means of this in her "power; it will be at once her fault and "her folly if she neglect it."

Whether physical science would form such a proper part of female education as the philosophy of the human mind, history, and the belles-lettres, may be disputed; but certainly the more informed and expanded a woman's mind is, the more chance she has of being respected, beloved, and happy. To discuss the merits of Euler's work, would be out of place here: the translation possesses ease and perspicuity, the two grand requisites in a work intended to simplify science, and reduce it to the level of every comprehension. A glossary of the scientific and foreign terms employed in the work is subjoined by the translator; and these Letters, by this means, still more adapted to the class of readers for whom they were principally designed.

Of all the pulpit orators who have committed their labours to the press, *Saurin*

appears to have been our author's principal favourite. The eloquence and congenial sentiments of this celebrated French divine, and the reception which a part of his works had met with from the English public, naturally induced Dr. Hunter to undertake a further translation of his sermons. To say that this translation equals the original elegance of Saurin, would be to institute a comparison on which many might start objections, and few are capable to decide; but any one who reads the translation must at least acknowledge, that it is eloquent English, and that its French origin is only discoverable in the title-page. Dr. Hunter was peculiarly qualified for executing this translation by his admiration of the author, by the very frequent perusal of his works, by coincidence of opinions, by experience in translations, and by a complete knowledge of the subjects of which Saurin treats. The volume translated consists of a selection of Saurin's sermons on sacramental occasions.

Castéra's Life of Catharine II. of Russia, closes the list of Dr. Hunter's translations.

This work being principally narrative, admitted of little embellishment in the translation, but is plain and perspicuous as it ought. The notes of the original work have been considerably abridged, the whole reduced into the size of one octavo volume.

We have now endeavoured to give a general idea of those literary labours which Dr. Hunter has bequeathed to posterity. We are conscious how difficult it is on such an occasion, when we are consigning the memory of a friend as it were to its last destination, to bestow our praise and censures with the same impartiality as we should on an author whom we had never personally known, and who had long since had his merits appreciated by public opinion. We feel, however, that if we have erred, our error is not intentional; and that this short review is polluted by no wilful exaggeration. We own that our attention may have been turned aside from the slighter blemishes by a circumstance which may be accounted by some a beauty of no small value, that we discover the very

soul of the author in every page of his works. The sentiments are evidently dictated by a sensibility, quick, keen, and yet never so much engrossed with one object as not to be readily susceptible of impressions from another: they evidently proceed from a heart overflowing with benevolence, and incapable of acting on the system that mankind were actuated by different feelings. The language is at times negligent, but, like his conversation, always animated and pleasing, and often highly embellished by warm and rapid effusions of fancy. The incorrectness which is sometimes discovered, may be said to have been owing to that same unsuspecting facility of temper, which made him look in the ordinary intercourse of life for indulgence in such venial omissions as he could readily pardon to others.

AS the service of the Lord's Supper is conducted in the Church of Scotland in a manner considerably different from what it is in the Church of England, a few explanatory notes are thought necessary to convey a distinct idea of the nature of several of the following pieces to such readers as may not be acquainted with the forms of the Church, for the service of which they were prepared. This sacrament is celebrated with extraordinary solemnity, and scarcely ever more than twice a year in any congregation in Scotland. A day in the middle of the week preceding the Sunday appointed for this purpose, is set apart as a day of fasting and humiliation; divine service is performed as on the Lord's day; and it is in every other respect regarded as equally sacred. The Saturday preceding the day of communion is denominated the day of preparation; divine service is performed; and the latter part of the day, at least, is devoted to religious exercises. On the Sunday the usual service of the Church is gone through; after which the Sacrament is ad-

ministered. The congregation is then dismissed, and, after a certain interval, being again assembled, the usual afternoon's service of the Church is performed. The Monday morning is likewise devoted to divine service, and this is called the day of thanksgiving.

As this sacrament, however, is not supposed to be connected with any particular date, it is left to the clergyman to chuse the day. Of this he gives intimation two or three Sundays before, and takes that opportunity of addressing his congregation, recommending the culture of such sentiments and dispositions as he thinks suitable to the occasion. The piece which immediately follows is one of these exhortations. It is to be regretted that Dr. Hunter did not leave among his manuscripts any of his addresses to communicants while at the sacramental table, as one of these, in addition to the other pieces, would have furnished a complete specimen of the mode of administering the Lord's Supper in the Church of Scotland.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESSES,

&c. &c.

INTIMATION OF THE SACRAMENT.

We intend, my brethren, if God permit, to dispense the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in this congregation this day three weeks.

Were I warranted to inform this assembly, that against this day three weeks, earthly majesty was to grace it with his presence, to receive our professions of loyalty and affection, and to bestow honours, and employments, and courtesies, upon such as should appear to deserve them at his hand, what ardour, what attention, what anxiety, should we then behold in preparing for so solemn an event! for none here surely has a hollow heart towards the best of earthly sovereigns. Well, my brethren, I am sufficiently warranted to inform you of an event infinitely more solemn, of a visit infinitely more honourable, fraught with consequences infinitely more important; a visit of Him by whom kings reign, of the King of kings, and Lord of lords; intended to manifest his glory, and to bestow unfading honours, durable treasures, incorruptible inheritances, upon his loyal subjects. Behold the King of glory

about to make his triumphant entry into the kingdom of his grace, with a design not to ennoble men, but to save them; not to remit crimes, but to forgive sins; to rescue, not from the axe and gibbet, but from the flames of hell; to confer, not titles and coronets, but crowns of glory. "Lift up your heads then, oh ye gates, even lift them up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

EXHORTATION, FAST DAY.

You* have now joined together several times in prayer and praise to God, and have once and again been addressed in the name of the Lord, with instructions, and advices, and reproofs, much suited to your present situation and prospect; but surely I need not inform you, that the public worship of God is profitable only to those who

* The service on the fast-day is performed, not by the minister of the parish, but by some of his neighbours. After this is over, however, it is customary for him to address the people just before they are dismissed. The public has here a specimen of Dr. Hunter's mode of exhortation on this occasion.

approach it, prepared with secret meditation and prayer; and improve it, when over, with the affectionate performance of the same exercises. Let me now recommend to your attention your closet, your God, your Bible, and your own heart. In that retirement, under an awful impression of the presence of that great Being, who is every where present, and knows all things, and according to that unerring rule which he has given us, examine and search, and try that heart, which God and conscience now alone can judge. And let me intreat you to go thoroughly and impartially to work. I like not going upon generals; it is not the way to come at truth in any enquiry whatever. When we apply for relief from bodily distress, we do not rest with telling the physician that indeed we are very ill; how should he act if we said no more? but point out the place, and describe the manner in which we are affected. It is too common, however, in spiritual plagues and diseases, to take cheerfully enough with the charge of being diseased, but to conceal as much as possible the particular plague or plagues. Many will frankly acknowledge a sinful heart, but you must not tell them, alas! they will not tell themselves, of a proud heart, a worldly heart, a malicious heart, an envious heart, a sensual heart.

EXHORTATION AT THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOKENS*.

I HAVE only further to suggest to you, my brethren, that as you are about to take a very near view of the most affecting and interesting object that ever was beheld by the eyes of men or angels, so you are about to exhibit a very affecting and interesting view of yourselves to God, to your own souls, and to the world. To God you can render no service so acceptable as a grateful remembrance of his own eternal, and his dear Son's dying love. To yourselves none can be so profitable as a solemn and cordial surrender of soul and body unto God, and a humble acceptance of gospel blessings upon gospel terms. To the world none so instructive as that which at once most loudly reproves and condemns proud

* After service, on the Saturday, the persons intending to communicate receive each from the minister or the elders of the parish a stamped piece of metal, denominated a token, which they return before receiving the sacrament on Sunday. The intention of this is to prevent any person not known to the minister, and approved of as a person acting worthy of the christian name, from seating himself among the communicants, and partaking of the sacrament. On this occasion, which is called the distribution of the tokens, an address, with suitable exhortations, is again delivered by the minister of the parish. The piece to which this note is subjoined is one of these addresses.

impenitent sinners, and most effectually comforts and confirms the humble and repenting.

In all, and every one of these views, say, O intended communicant, whether or not it be a very serious matter you have in hand. Say, if that work ought to be cautiously, zealously, affectionately gone about, which, rightly performed, will highly redound to the glory of God, your own everlasting peace, and the good of mankind. But abused by formality, indifference, ignorance, treachery, reflects the highest dishonour on God, that a creature can offer; will infallibly strike through your own soul with many sorrows, harden the impenitent in their unbelief, and wound the hearts of those whom God would not have made sad. I should, however, but betray my own, and rivet your ignorance, did I pretend that these ends could be prevented, and the others produced, by a few minutes or hours passed this evening in a more than ordinary degree of recollection, and seriousness, and devotion. I hope, my brethren, a life of antecedent holiness is the preparation you have been making for the Lord's table; if you have not, there is much reason to fear, that your occasional fasting, and praying, and communicating, will tend rather to harden the heart, than promote the life of God in the soul. But should even this be the case,

and God grant it may be the case with none of you, it is my joy, that I can recommend you, even at this late hour, to that Spirit of wisdom and holiness who can work independent of all means; who can do a durable, eternal work, in a moment of time, and by a single exertion of his will, can transform a heart of stone into a heart of flesh. To this blessed Spirit I therefore commend you all, for God knows we have all much need of his enlightening, quickening, sanctifying, preserving power; and may He of his sovereign grace make this institution of our ever adorable Lord and Saviour, a season of much light and power, and comfort, and refreshing to us all. Amen.

FENCING OF THE TABLES*.

By the good hand of our God upon us, my dear christian friends, we are this day allowed to observe another great gospel solemnity in this place.

* After the ordinary service of the Sunday is over, and immediately before the distribution of the sacrament begins, the clergyman addresses the people, and informs them, that as this sacrament is intended only for the true christian, those who are conscious of dispositions inconsistent with that title, are debarred from it. He then enumerates the several sins, a subjection to which excludes from the worthily partaking of the Lord's Supper. This is called fencing the tables, or defending them from the approach of unworthy persons.

The usual preparatory steps, which the rules of our Church prescribe, have been solemnly gone through: nothing remains, therefore, but that we address ourselves to the work itself. The command and example of our blessed Lord, the great Head of his Church, is our warrant and authority, which you may see recorded in the christian's great charter, the Holy Bible: * "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to him-

* 1 Cor. xi. 23—29.

self, not discerning the Lord's body." As the Apostle here directs that a man examine himself, and points out the danger of a rash approach to this holy table, it is evident, that this ordinance is not fit for all men promiscuously, but is attended with very dreadful consequences to the unworthy receiver: the reason of the thing therefore, and the constitutions of this Church, and the place where I stand, and desire to maintain as much as possible the communion of saints pure and unmixed, and concern for precious immortal souls, all require of me to warn the ignorant and the scandalous from approaching this sacred institution. If there is therefore now hearing me any one who is grossly ignorant of the rudiments of the Gospel of Christ, a stranger to the uses and ends of this ordinance in particular, who has been at no pains to be rightly informed of the nature of the Gospel covenant, which it has pleased God to make with men, through his Son Jesus Christ, but who may have been engaged by the force of custom and example to think of sitting down here with the people of God, such a person I must exhort, and admonish, and beseech, and command not to approach; and I would farther intreat all such persons immediately to set about using the proper means for receiving instruction, that if it shall please God to grant them

impenitent sinners, and most effectually comforts and confirms the humble and repenting.

In all, and every one of these views, say, O intended communicant, whether or not it be a very serious matter you have in hand. Say, if that work ought to be cautiously, zealously, affectionately gone about, which, rightly performed, will highly redound to the glory of God, your own everlasting peace, and the good of mankind. But abused by formality, indifference, ignorance, treachery, reflects the highest dishonour on God, that a creature can offer; will infallibly strike through your own soul with many sorrows, harden the impenitent in their unbelief, and wound the hearts of those whom God would not have made sad. I should, however, but betray my own, and rivet your ignorance, did I pretend that these ends could be prevented, and the others produced, by a few minutes or hours passed this evening in a more than ordinary degree of recollection, and seriousness, and devotion. I hope, my brethren, a life of antecedent holiness is the preparation you have been making for the Lord's table; if you have not, there is much reason to fear, that your occasional fasting, and praying, and communicating, will tend rather to harden the heart, than promote the life of God in the soul. But should even this be the case,

You should come here, my friends, in the same frame, with the same dispositions, in which you would wish to go into eternity. If you would be filled with horror then at the prospect of appearing before God in judgment, tremble, in your present situation, to mix with his holy people at his holy table with your unhallowed hearts; for know assuredly that God will find you, and allow me, as a friend, to intreat your absence. If, notwithstanding, you will persist in your rash purpose, I call God and men, and your own consciences, to witness I am free of your blood; and oh! improve this solemn warning I now give you in the tenderness of my heart, to fly from the wrath to come, before iniquity prove your ruin. If there are therefore in this assembly any careless, thoughtless sinners, intemperate in the use of meats or drinks, or of their own bodies, or swearers or sabbath breakers, any who live in the commission of any known sin, or the neglect of any known duty, to all such I must denounce the high displeasure of God if they come forward.

From the nature and design of this ordinance, and in obedience to the constitution of our Church, as well as from the same principle of love to precious and immortal souls, I on the

other hand intreat to come forward, all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, all who are by grace determined to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, who are determined to quit every consideration, when it comes in competition with duty to him. "Who is there here then that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose;" and though he may now, and frequently, "walk in darkness," yet "let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." Who is here that is come to the happy resolution of seeking "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," of securing above all things "the one thing needful;" who is "born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;" who is not only almost, but altogether a christian; who has committed his grand care, and all inferior concerns, to God, and is come up today to join himself with him in an everlasting covenant, resolving to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to persevere in the way to Zion, with his face thitherward;" all such I heartily congratulate upon the happy choice they have made; they are welcome guests, they are worthy communicants; come in therefore ye blessed of the Lord; "though your beginnings be small,

your latter end shall be greatly increased:" come cast in your lot among us, affix each of you his seal to the truth of christianity, write down your name in the eternal records, and may God strengthen your hands, and encourage your hearts.

May the very "God of Peace that brought "again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great "shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of "the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in "every good work to do his will, working in you "that which is well pleasing in his sight, through "Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and "ever." Amen.

After the fencing of the tables, and immediately before distributing the bread and wine to the communicants, in imitation of our Lord, who blessed, before he brake the bread, and gave it to his disciples, a prayer is delivered by the clergyman, of which the public have the two following specimens.

PRAYERS.

THE CONSECRATION PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and eternal Jehovah, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, thou great First Cause, thou Author of our being, thou Giver of our happiness, we worship thee with our souls, and with our bodies, which are thine. We glory in our divine original, for we were made like unto thee, in knowledge, in righteousness, in holiness; and blessed be thy name, we still retain many traces of the Divinity in our souls, and we live in hope of being once again exalted into a conformity to thy blessed and glorious image. We rejoice in the means which thou hast graciously provided for this end, the Gospel of thy dear son; we rejoice in the numberless triumphs which the religion of Jesus has already made over the powers of hell, and in the beautiful prospect of those numberless ones it has yet to make over the hearts of men, till all the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. We rejoice in our own happy, happy lot, by which we are placed in a land of light and knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, and of the belief and practice of christianity, by which we were early initiated into, and educated in that holy and divine religion. We glory in

the name of christians, we account it our highest honour, our most distinguishing privilege, that we are called after him who was hanged on a tree. Were the bloody sword of the cruel persecutor hanging over our heads, were immediate tortures and death to be the consequence, we would not be terrified into the denying of our name; we would not be ashamed or afraid to profess the Gospel of Christ: but blessed, ever blessed be God, we have no such hard trial of our faith imposed upon us. We glory in the blessed and happy effects which the Gospel has produced upon our own souls; that we have been timeously warned and determined by it to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold upon eternal life. We adore the riches of that free grace and love which arrested us in the middle of a sinful sinning course, and gave us such serious views of our sin and danger as engaged us to fly for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us, and thereby prevented our eternal ruin. We glory in all those wonderful displays of thy wisdom and goodness manifested in the several amazing steps by which we have been conducted hitherto. We triumph in the glory that is set before us, in that perfection we one day hope to attain, in that splendor with which we hope to be invested, in that immortality with which we hope to be clothed; in those rivers of

pleasures which we hope to taste; in those crowns of glory which we hope to wear; in that heavenly Jerusalem of which we hope to be the inhabitants.

And now, O Lord our God, look down from heaven, thy dwelling-place, and behold with all the gracious influences of thy presence and love thy people assembled here; this goodly number of thy saints come together in thy name, in obedience to thy commandment, solemnly to commemorate the dying love of their Saviour, by eating bread and drinking wine at his table. O almighty and exalted Jesus, who on that memorable night which preceded thy sufferings, didst appoint this devout memorial of thee, and who by thy example hast taught us to implore a blessing upon, and to give thanks for all our comforts, give thy divine blessing upon these elements of bread and wine, which we hereby set apart for thy service, and for the hallowed use of thy people. Teach us to eye them by faith, as representations of thy broken body and shed blood: we do this in remembrance of thee, because thou hast commanded us, because we love thee, because it is good for us. We now declare before God, and angels, and men, that we are thine; we call the all-seeing eye to witness the sincerity

of our hearts; we call angels, those pure spirits, to witness; we call all those our fellow-christians to witness; we call these consecrated walls to witness; we call this table, and these elements, to witness, that we hereby lay hold upon thy covenant; that we hereby give ourselves wholly up unto thee, to be washed in thy blood; to be taught and led by thy spirit; to be governed by thy laws; to be saved by thy merits. O record in heaven what we are now to do upon earth to our eternal glory and honour, and in the proper performance of these duties upon earth. May we be gradually prepared for thy service, and the enjoyment of thee in heaven.

And will God in very deed dwell with men on earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, much less this house which we now occupy. Yes, Lord, we believe thou art in this place; the shout of a king is even now heard among us; for though thou art the high and holy One that inhabitest eternity, yet dost thou dwell with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, and trembleth at thy word. Oh then rend the heavens, and come down; let the mountains flow down at thy presence, that to the endless ages of eternity we may have reason to say it was good for us to be here. And now

unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

ANOTHER.

We thank thee, Holy Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for all thy inexpressible, inconceivable goodness to us thy undeserving children. Every thing we see around us, every thing we feel within us, furnishes endless ground of love and praise; for all proclaims thy matchless grace. In thy glorious works of creation we read thy name, the Lord God Almighty; in the mysterious ways of thy providence we acknowledge thee the only wise God; and in the gospel of thy grace, our souls, with joy unspeakable, discern that God is love. Oh the heighth and depth, the length and breadth, of the love of God; it passeth understanding, for it is like thyself, eternal, immense, sovereign, and free; it passeth understanding, for Jesus is the gift it has bestowed; it passeth understanding, for sinful men are the objects of it; it passeth understanding, for it surpasseth even our guilt, which is magnified till

it reacheth unto heaven. We dishonour thee, gracious Father, by rating thy love from any thing about ourselves. What is even our guilt, the guilt of a thousand worlds, when the love of God comes into view? It is lost, it is swallowed up in this boundless, unfathomable ocean. But shall we sin because grace abounds and superabounds? Oh Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that our souls detest such baseness, such ingratitude; thou hast bound us in chains of love to thyself, and we kiss our chains, and solace ourselves in the blessed bondage; we triumph in our happy, happy condition, as thy captive servants, children, friends; we never were free, we never were happy, till we received thy yoke, and we will wear it for ever. And by what means, oh Father, shall we express our gratitude and love to thee? Alas! what have we that we have not received? but what have we but thy own benefits? or, at any rate, how could we add to thy honour and happiness? But thou art graciously pleased to account thyself honoured when we are exalted to the distinguished honour of being thy children; when thou receivest back thy own gifts; thou art pleased to account it as an accession to thy happiness, when we become happy. Most merciful Father, with our souls we thank thee, that thou art not this

day dealing with us as thou hast sometimes dealt with thy dearest children; demanding a hard, a painful proof of our love: that thou art not putting our frail nature to the severe trial of resigning our dearest delights, or of suffering hard things for the sake of Jesus.

Blessed be God, our task is a delightful labour of love. Blessed be our gracious Redeemer, we are called not to give up what we have, but to receive more abundantly; not to eat the bread and drink the water of affliction, but the bread and water of life: not to the racks and tortures, not to scaffolds and stakes, which our forefathers endured, but to partake in the crown and throne and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh Lord, if in thy all-wise providence thou hast decreed such hard things for us, we know it will be for thy greater glory, and our greater good; and we trust our souls shall ever be strengthened by thy grace to fulfil thy high indisputable will. In the meanwhile, Holy Father, in thy love we will approach, and with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation. Be graciously pleased therefore to bless our spiritual repast; in thy name we set apart these elements of bread and wine from a common to a sacred use, as the memorial of thy dear son's broken body and shed blood: in

thy name we warn the ignorant and the profane not to intermeddle with these holy things; in thy name we bid thy own dear, humble, desiring, hungering children, most heartily welcome. And oh Lord grant, while with our eyes we look upon, with our hands take, and into our mouths receive these sacred symbols, that Christ himself, the king of glory, may enter and take full possession of our souls. Amen.

SERMON I.

JER. l. 4, 5.

In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God.
They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

THE CHRISTIAN TRAVELLER TOWARDS ZION.

WHAT a face of solemnity is here! what expectation, what attention! Let me begin with asking you, my friends, wherefore are you come up hither? wherefore is this goodly number of christians assembled together in the house of prayer this morning of the Lord's day? You have already been joining together in celebrating the praises of God, and in offering up the sacrifice of prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Have your whole souls entered into the spirit of these devout exercises? I hope they have. The most solemn and important part of your duty is still before you; the proper business of this day,

namely, the commemoration of the dying love of your Redeemer. The design of the present discourse is to awaken proper sentiments in your souls upon this occasion; a task to which I am very unequal, for, alas, my own heart feels too little of that fire of love, that glow of gratitude, that warmth of devotion, which should inspire every breast, when a crucified Saviour is the object. So much the rather do thou, O promised Spirit of love, and grace, and consolation, and hope, and joy, descend upon our dead languid souls, and enliven every power to the holy contemplation of all the wonders of redeeming love; that every one of us may with thy apostle cry out—"I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The first Sermon I preached to this congregation *, after I had the honour of becoming your minister, was from the same words I have now read. After long searching for a text suitable to the present purpose, and frequently imploring

* This Sermon will be found in Vol. II. and was delivered in South Leith Church, Jan. 10, 1766.

the divine direction herein, I was at length determined again to make use of them previous to my first dispensing the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper among you. As it was my earnest desire then to be blessed of God, in reconciling the hearts of all with whom I was so nearly connected, to seek together the Lord their God, and to ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. I trust it is still, and shall be, my sincere desire and prayer to God, that you may be all joined together in love, engaged in one common pursuit, determined with one consent to join yourselves unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant. What I propose therefore at this time is, as God shall be pleased to enable, in the first place—To consider very briefly the nature of that covenant, which every christian is supposed to ratify by sitting down at the table of the Lord. 2. I shall enquire into the obligation and necessity of so doing. 3. Point out the propriety of having our profession and practice similar, and then conclude with some meditations suitable to the design of our present meeting. I am in the

1st place, to consider very briefly the nature of that covenant, which every christian is supposed to ratify by setting down at the table of

the Lord. The language of this covenant upon your part, my friends, is, "let us join ourselves unto the Lord; O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." The language of your Saviour in your name is, "Holy Father, behold, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me. Keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." And the language of Almighty God, upon his part, is, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money come ye buy and eat, yea, come and buy wine and milk without money and without price." By sitting down therefore at the table of the Lord, you engage in the most solemn and explicit manner to be his wholly, his only, and his for ever. Attend therefore diligently to what you are about; this is a very serious matter; a matter which may be attended with eternal consequences. You are going to renounce, and that for ever, and in every shape, sin of all kinds. See then, O see, that no favourite idol lie concealed within your hearts; for if so, the Lord will not hear you. You have to do with a heart-searching God, who knows perfectly what passes in the secret recesses of your souls; and who, on that account, is not

to be imposed upon by any outward profession or appearance. Farther, by partaking of this holy ordinance, you solemnly declare yourselves to be well pleased with that method of salvation which is revealed in the Gospel of Christ. What is the plain language of every sincere communicant, when he partakes of the sacramental bread and cup, but this: I am infinitely, I desire to be eternally indebted to the free grace and love of my Saviour, who died for my sins, and rose again for my justification. O God, may this Saviour be of thee, made unto me "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I make this public commemoration of the death of Christ, as a proof that I am not ashamed of him, nor of his Gospel; but that I glory in a crucified Jesus; that I esteem even the reproach of Christ, above all the riches, and honours, and pleasures, of a vain world. Finally, you engage, by sitting down at the Lord's table, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, and you are determined, through grace, that nothing shall separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Think, O think seriously and frequently, how much is expected and required of a christian. And yet there is nothing expected, nothing required, but what is in itself the dignity, the happiness, of human

nature; but to be like Christ, but to be good, but to be happy: for happiness is what God gives us the fullest assurance of upon his side. What a gracious Being have we to deal with! who, instead of punishing the breach of the first covenant upon the guilty posterity of Adam, as, consistently with justice, he might have done, has introduced a better hope, by the mediation of his blessed Son, who is made the surety of a better testament, the mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises; and this is the covenant; these the promises. "In those days saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother; saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*." And to-day, O christians, even to-day, is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. This covenant is firmly established in the blood of Jesus; the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off: here behold sin expiated, peace

* Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

and pardon procured; justice satisfied; God appeased; the curse done away; death and hell vanquished; the celestial gates opened; salvation, eternal salvation purchased, and ready to be conferred; and the bread and water of life served up for your present entertainment. All things are ready, and it is the voice of your Saviour, of the beloved of your souls: "Eat, O friends, yea drink abundantly, oh beloved." The text suggests still another circumstance of this covenant, well worth attending to. It is a perpetual "covenant that shall not be forgot-"ten." Remember, my dear fellow christians, that what we do this day in this place will be recorded in durable characters; will be engrossed into the records of eternity, as an everlasting remembrance. You do, you can do nothing in life that is trifling, that is unimportant; but O how very serious, how very, very important a matter it is to ratify a perpetual covenant with God; to take a vast step for eternity. I now proceed in the

2d place, to enquire into the obligation and necessity of so doing. The grand obligation to all duty is the will, the commandment of God; and in the present case it is most express: it was our blessed Saviour's last dying command:

"Do this, in remembrance of me." Does not the obligation here strike every ingenuous, every thinking mind?—Absent friends are commonly remembered with pleasure, and obeyed with delight—There is a peculiar satisfaction in giving one at a distance, whom we really value and esteem, a proof of our affection, even though it should put us to some small inconveniency. If a superior demands a pledge of our attachment to him, how ready are we to give it! more especially, if he has been in any manner our benefactor; if he has honoured us with his friendship. A deceased friend, of all others, has the strongest claim upon our affection; his will we justly reckon sacred, inviolable. We cannot do a greater dishonour to his memory, than by disregarding his last, his dying commands—What a strong necessity is laid upon us then, O christians, to comply with the dying request of Jesus! Is there one here so stupid, as not to reflect that here Christ both commands as a master, and asks as a friend; and that he indeed is at once a master and a friend; a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He appears in the light of a departed friend, who has left this one, this easy charge, "Do this, in remembrance of me." In return for all the numberless, unmerited favours I have conferred, for all the nameless benefits I

daily bestow, I ask but this, set apart now and then a little time for thinking upon my love.

But here is not only a debt of gratitude, but of duty also. It is the absolute command of him who has an undoubted right to our obedience; of him whom we cannot but acknowledge as our rightful Lord and Sovereign, and whom we actually do acknowledge, when we take his name upon us. If we are sensible of no such obligation upon us, let us at once, like honest men, throw off every fetter, deny our name, withdraw our countenance from every christian institution, and henceforth live at large. If conscience suggests to us that such a conduct might be unsafe, that it would be better to adhere to christianity, to retain the name, let us remember at the same time that this is an express law of our Redeemer, and that therefore the neglect of it is sinful, is dangerous.

But further, there is in this an obligation of interest, as well as of duty and gratitude. Were a worldly inheritance in question, would not every one be as careful and diligent as he possibly could in proving his relation to the testator. What bustle, and emulation, and scrambling, do we frequently see in cases of that kind, where a

perishable treasure is the subject; and is any one so blind to his own eternal interests, as to be slack in putting in his claim for heaven and eternal life? is any one backward in qualifying himself for "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation?" When I think of this, I am the more concerned, upon looking round this congregation, to observe the places of several, who attend here upon ordinary sabbath days, empty upon this, or filled with others. I am particularly grieved to miss here many of my young friends, whom I have reason to regard and value; but who deprive me of the pleasure of loving them as fellow-christians: who receive the intimation of the sacrament, as a warning to go and spend a few days in the country, and thus explicitly declare, that they count themselves unworthy of eternal life; who thus voluntarily give up heaven and happiness. God pity them, God forgive them, God give them another way of thinking. And let us christians bless God, who has given us different views of our duty, and of our interest; let us approach, and with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation; and may what we are now to do be a token for good to every one of us. I am in the

3d place, to point out the propriety of having our profession and practice similar. I need not observe to you, that the text, in its literal import, refers to the return of the Israelitish nation from the Babylonish bondage and captivity into their native country: neither is it necessary or convenient now to illustrate the various points of similitude betwixt their situation in such circumstances, and ours under the Gospel; feeling the bitter, hard bondage of sin; groaning to be delivered from it; and rejoicing in the prospect of deliverance from it, and of that rest which is prepared for the people of God. All I can now observe is, that all true christians have their desires toward the heavenly country; are professedly travelling toward their home and place of rest; and that, in consequence of this, they are careful in asking the way, and have their faces constantly set thitherwards.—Say, christians, is it decent, is it proper, for those, who are this day encompassing the altar of God, to be to-morrow mixing in the vanity, the nonsense, and the intemperance of the world? O then behave like yourselves; remember you have a character to support, and an important one it is; remember your own honour, and the honour of the christian name, is at stake. I need say no more, but now conclude with directing you to some sub-

jects of meditation suitable to the present occasion, which I shall endeavour to do mostly in scripture language. Approach then this holy table, singing the song of the heavenly Host. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth "peace, good will towards men." Behold here heaven and earth reconciled; the offended God, and offending creature, once more upon good terms, through the Mediator of the new covenant: behold "mercy and truth met together, "righteousness and peace embracing each other:" Praise and thanksgiving is a duty at all times pleasant and comely; but especially at this time, when salvation is the delightful theme; when universal triumph over the powers of darkness is thus gloriously displayed; when the great Captain of our salvation rides forth in the chariot of the everlasting Gospel; "travelling in the "greatness of his strength; conquering and to "conquer." Lift up your heads then, O christians, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh: by and by all your enemies shall be trampled under your feet. Again, approach this holy table, with the words of the psalmist in your mouths. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but "unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and "for thy truth's sake *." There is nothing to be

* Ps. cxv. 1.

seen here but what tends, in the strongest manner, to mortify human pride; for we see here a poor, despised, reproached, persecuted Jesus—him, "who had no sin, made sin for us." We were "as sheep going astray;" poor helpless wanderers, nay, what is infinitely worse, guilty, rebellious criminals; and yet we found mercy, and yet we were brought back to the Shepherd. Let the consideration, therefore, of what you were by nature, compared with what you are by grace, raise in your souls the mixed emotions of self-abasement, of gratitude, and joy. And, in the last place, look forward to the end of your faith, and hope, and labour, and patience—the full accomplishment of your eternal salvation. We now look back to a crucified Saviour; but we can also look forward to a glorious and exalted Redeemer; to that important and decisive period when "he shall come "again, the second time, without sin unto sal-"vation." O think of the triumphs of faith which then await you, when all that you have heard of rivers of pleasure, and crowns of glory, shall be far exceeded; when a Godless, Christless, thoughtless world shall mourn and weep, and "call upon "the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to "cover them; when you shall rejoice, and be ex-"ceeding glad; for sorrow and sighing shall for

" ever flee away." O think what it is to be ever, ever with the Lord. Look then with a holy contempt on every thing around you. Think, O christians, of the raptures that will then fill our souls, when we shall meet in the fulness of bliss, never to part again, and be to all eternity each other's joy and crown of rejoicing, and be together invested with all the glories of immortality; and be made like God, and put in possession of " an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that " fadeth not away." Approach then, christians, and with joy " draw water out of the wells " of salvation;" take earnest of the purchased possession; and ratify with God an everlasting covenant, that shall not be forgotten; and may God do for you above and beyond what we can ask or think, and to his name be praise. Amen.

SERMON II.

HEB. iv. 14.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

PREPARATION FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON PERSEVERANCE IN RELIGION.

GOD is calling you, in his providence, my brethren, to make a very public and solemn profession of the faith and hope which are in you. It surely concerns you very highly that they be in you of a truth: seeing you have to do with One who seeth, not as man seeth, who regards not appearances only, but who searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the children of men; whose "eyes, as a flame of fire, go up "and down through the earth, beholding the evil "and the good." That the practice of many who call themselves christians, woefully belies their profession, is a truth as affecting as it is evident. As it was in the Apostle's days, so it is in our own: "Many walk," of whom it must be said, with the deepest regret, that "they are

"the enemies of the cross of Christ;" for, besides the vast multitudes who either have no profession of religion at all, or who have declared open war against the God of heaven and earth, how many are there of those who would be thought the friends of Christ, who do much to bring reproach on the venerable name whereby they are called, and give to these declared foes of God and goodness much occasion to blaspheme. Hence, the cause of christianity suffers as much, if not more, by the treachery of false and hollow friends, as by the open malice of avowed enemies. It cannot be reckoned a satire upon the age or place of the world we live in to say, that this corner has seen times at least as favourable to the interests of religion as the present. If in some things we have gone beyond our forefathers, it will hardly be alleged, that a solid and fervent piety is one of them. Through the abundance of iniquity, the love of many, if not quite extinguished, has at least waxed cold.

It is from you, my brethren, who mean to encompass the Lord's holy table to-morrow, that the religion of Jesus Christ is, as from its sworn friends, under God, to expect revival and support. If you do your duty, by holding fast your profession, it will be at once your honour and your

happiness to stand by that cause for which apostles and saints have shed their blood; but if you basely desert it, surely "enlargement and deliver-"ance shall arise from another place," while you sink under the shame and guilt of betraying "the "Son of man with a kiss." That I may, by the grace of God, assist in preparing you for the proper discharge of the duty to which you are now called, and at the same time direct you to the right improvement of it in all time to come, I shall, in a dependance on the divine aid—1st. In a few particulars illustrate the nature of the christian profession. 2dly. Consider what may be implied in *holding fast* that profession. And, 3dly. Point out to your notice the motives to this duty suggested in the text. I am, in the

Ist place, to tell you, in a few words, what a christian's profession is—and

1st. He professes to believe the whole of the testimony which God has given to the world concerning his Son Christ Jesus; or, in other words, he professes a cordial assent to the whole of scripture truth, which uniformly and throughout testifies of Jesus the Lord, from the beginning of the first creation, when he appears by the word of his power giving existence to the

heavens and the earth, for by him it is expressly declared, " God made the world," to the time when God shall by him make all things new, of which the christian professes his joyful expectation in the concluding words of the book of God: " Amen; even so come Lord Jesus." From the first promise of his first appearance, " the seed of " the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," to the last promise of his second coming. " Behold I " come quickly." The christian stands by his Bible, not merely by paying the unmeaning compliment of some, who are pleased to allow that there are many beautiful and excellent things in it, but by esteeming, receiving, and reverencing it, as the truth of God, as being spirit and life to every believing soul, as the power and wisdom of God unto salvation. He therefore reads and searches the Scriptures, not only with a view to inform his judgment, to gratify or improve a taste for fine writing, though no book is equally calculated to answer even these ends; but also to affect and amend his heart; to form and regulate his life. Thus, while he seeks light to his understanding in scripture doctrines, he finds an unerring directory in scripture precepts, a never-failing support in scripture encouragements; and, in the depths of distress, a refreshing cordial in scripture promises. In their own expressive language, " God's

" statutes are his songs in the house of his pil-
" grimage." Hence, he is engaged to use them not sparingly and occasionally, but liberally and constantly. If his delight, with the blessed man of the Psalmist, " is in the law of the Lord," he will with him " meditate in it day and night." To one who thus esteems and uses the Bible it cannot but be matter of sorrow, that what is his peculiarly precious treasure should be totally disregarded by many, employed to very little, if any good purpose, by others, and abused to the very worst of purposes by not a few.

2dly. The christian profession is a profession of practical conformity to the whole of God's revealed will. As scripture doctrines are the rule and measure of christian faith, so scripture commandments must be the rule of christian practice and conduct in every state and stage of life. The believer in Christ considers him not only as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, but also as a pattern which he is bound to copy after; and considers himself as entitled to the comforts of religion, only in so far as by the grace of God he is enabled to perform its duties. Is a christian obliged to be more excellent than his neighbour? Beyond all peradventure; for he does what the man of the world does not; he

professes universal holiness, holiness in heart and in life. For committing no sin does he pretend to ask permission; from the performance of no duty does he pretend to plead exemption. Love to God and love to mankind being his two leading principles, the constant exercise of them in one shape or other is his professed grand aim. And these great principles determine every choice he makes: in cases where the right and wrong are certain and evident, they engage him without hesitation to chuse the good, and refuse the evil; in cases doubtful, they determine him, without hesitation, to prefer the safe side. Hence he rejects the use of many things which the world thinks and calls innocent and indifferent, because, when weighed in this balance, they are found greatly wanting; because, when tried by this test, things seemingly innocent are found dangerous, and things called indifferent highly pernicious. It cannot indeed be with truth asserted, that all christians, or indeed that any one, is thus actually "perfecting "holiness in the fear of God," for "in many things "we all offend, and greatly come short of the "glory of God;" but we are speaking of the christian profession, which points at a perfect standard, pleads for no concessions, and countenances no failures; though at the same time it may, with truth, and in sincerity, be made by persons who

fall greatly short of the standard, need many charitable concessions and constructions, and are chargeable with very considerable failings: in all which cases, that very profession leads him who has embraced it with a "humble boldness to the "throne of grace, for pardoning mercy and grace "to help him in time of need." Such is a christian's professed faith and practice. In the

3d place, his professed hope is eternal life and glory in heaven; the gift of God, through Jesus Christ. This profession is a fair renunciation of the world, and the things of the world, as a separate independent good, as a suitable and satisfying portion; it is a fair acceptance of the religion of Jesus, with all its present inconveniencies, for the sake of its delightful prospects; a voluntary and cheerful acquiescence in the painful self-denial which it now enjoins, for the sake of the solid and sublime gratifications which it promises; a patient suffering of a crown of thorns and a cross upon earth, for a throne and crown of glory in heaven. As one who "is risen with "Christ," he "seeks those things which are above "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;" and considers present things and events, of whatever kind, whether good or evil, prosperous or afflictive, as altogether "unworthy of being com-

"pared with the glory to be revealed." Not as "yet having received the promises, yet seeing "them afar off, and being persuaded of them, and "having embraced them, he confesses that he is a "stranger and pilgrim on the earth: he declares "plainly that he seeks a country, that he desires a "better country, that is an heavenly—therefore "his conversation is even now in heaven, from "whence also he looks for the Saviour, the Lord "Jesus Christ."—Having thus set forth the nature of the christian profession, I proceed, as was proposed, in the

Second place, to consider what is implied in holding fast our profession; and this necessarily presupposes—

1st. That we actually have a profession.—A man can never, with propriety, be bid to retain that of which he never was in possession. The apostle is here addressing himself to those who had voluntarily embraced the gospel, and who enjoyed all the privileges of it; and who, in that age and state of the church, maintained their profession at the hazard of their lives, and reputation, and goods. It is not so with us in these latter days; we have a kind of profession long before we are conscious of it; we are nominally

christians, almost from the very womb; we are, in our earliest infancy, devoted to God in baptism—and this, indeed, is all the profession which great numbers ever choose to make; while the farther profession of many others is a thing so fluctuating, so inconsistent, so formal, and so lifeless, that it matters little whether they retain it or not. That which you are about to make is a very serious and solemn one, and requires no little consideration, and self-examination, and prayer; for a creature, while upon earth, can perform no service equally important and interesting, with that of making a public profession of the christian faith over the sacred symbols of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood—which directs me to observe, in the

Second place, that holding fast our profession, supposes a just sense and esteem of its high value. Men are generally most anxious in securing their most precious goods; their gold, and silver, and jewels. On meaner effects they bestow a less share of their attention; their dross and chaff they give to the winds. Now, the infinite value, the everlasting consequence of a well-grounded profession, is best known from Jesus Christ himself, the great Apostle and high-priest of it. "Whosoever shall confess me be-

"fore men, him will I confess before my Father "which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny "me before men, him will I also deny before my "Father which is in heaven*." This is bringing the matter to a very awful decision—it is a matter of eternal life and death—of endless honour and shame. The day is fast approaching, when none will think it their disgrace to own and acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth, the once and still much-despised Galilean; when many shall put in a claim to his acquaintance who never knew him.—"Many will say "to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not pro-"phesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast "out devils? and in thy name done many wonder-"ful works? And then will I profess unto them, I "never knew you: depart from me, ye that work "iniquity†:" for "not every one that saith unto "me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of "heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father "which is in heaven ‡," which shews us at once, my brethren, the nature and importance of our christian profession; and it is a sense of this importance which makes the Apostle so precise and so earnest in explaining and recommending it in his Epistle to the Romans. "I beseech you, therefore, "brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present

* Mat. x. 32, 33. † Mat. vii. 22, 23. ‡ Mat. vii. 21.

" your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable
" unto God, which is your reasonable service.
" And be not conformed to this world: but be ye
" transformed by the renewing of your mind,
" that ye may prove what is that good, and ac-
" ceptable, and perfect will of God." *—In the

3d place. When we are exhorted to hold fast our profession, it is supposed that we may be tempted to forsake it, or be in danger of having it wrested from us. And God knows this is but too much the case—what with great weakness from within, and violent attacks from without, religion, with most men, is hardly able to maintain what little ground it may have gained. The bloody sword of persecution is indeed, through the infinite mercy of God, long since sheathed; but the devil and the world have not for that, ceased to be the enemies of Jesus Christ and his religion, and of those who profess it; and alas! too fatally effect that by caresses, which they have often endeavoured, in vain, by violence. God forbid, that we should ever see religion borrow lustre from a persecuting opposition: but let its professed friends know that it may be stolen from them when they are at ease, inattentive, or asleep, though they may flatter themselves, and

* Rom. xii. 1, 2.

perhaps with justice, that they would make the stoutest resistance, if roused by an apparent attack. Satan may, and too often does, obtain his end, by letting men alone, better than by giving them disturbance; and the smiles of the world have generally been found infinitely more fatal than its frowns: if our profession is parted with, what matters it whether force or guile were employed: if the vessel is lost, it is of very little consequence, whether a secret, unsuspected leak sunk her to the bottom in smooth water, or the furious tempest dashed her in pieces against the rocks.—Holding fast our profession, therefore, implies both vigilance and vigour, correspondent to the danger seen and unseen, declared and suspected, to which it is exposed.

4thly. When a christian is called to hold fast his profession, he is called to the regular, uniform, constant exercise of it; christianity is his business, his trade, and he must not be slothful in business, but "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Professors of the various arts and sciences are active, not only in their schools and shops, but in every place, not only when actually employed in teaching their pupils, or making from time to time public exhibitions of their skill, but on every occasion that calls forth the gift that is in them;

and it is esteemed highly dishonourable for such, ever to be found tardy in their own particular walk. In like manner, the professor of christianity ought to be a christian, not only at church, at sacrament time, in his family, or his closet devotions, but when he eats, when he drinks, when he is in the city, and in the field; when he comes in, and when he goes out; when he lies down, and when he rises up. If a few external formal things constitute a christian, then the world is unquestionably filled with them; but as a man may be able to read a very good lecture on medicine or eloquence, without being a physician or an orator, so it is but too possible to assume "a form of godliness," with little or nothing of "the power of it." It is exceedingly dishonourable for you, professing christians, if on any occasion it become a question, whether you are indeed a christian or not? and it is a question which most certainly will be started, when the slightest occasion is given for it. O then give the enemies of your Master as little reason as possible to wound him through your means; on the contrary, as there are so many who know not what christianity is from the Bible, let them know what it is by consulting your lives—be to them a living Bible, persuading them, in the most earnest manner, of the reality of religion,

and its powerful efficacy—reproving the gainsayers, and stopping the mouths of such as blaspheme.—In the

5th and last place. Holding fast our profession implies perseverance in it, even unto the end. The obligation to this great and comprehensive duty can never expire; death itself does not bring it to a period, for christianity is the profession of "the spirits of just men made perfect," whose glory is, "robes washed, and made white in "the blood of the Lamb," and whose eternal song of praise is "unto him that loved us, and "washed "us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made "us kings and priests unto God and his Father; "to him be glory and dominion, for ever and "ever, amen:" and whose encouragement, in a state of imperfection, was, "be thou faithful "unto death, and I will give thee a crown of "life." Let us then "hold the beginning of our "confidence stedfast unto the end." O christian, "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man "take thy crown," for he alone "who endureth to "the end shall be saved." Would you wish to be supported at a dying hour, with the well-grounded hope of an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, O part not with it till then, when you will fully discern its vast, its eternal import; and then com-

mit yourself and it to the mercy of God, through the Saviour, in Paul's blessed persuasion, "that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor princi- "palities, nor powers, nor things present, nor "things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any "other creature, shall be able to separate us from "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our "Lord."—I proceed, in the

IIId and last place, to point out to you the motives to your duty, suggested in the text. The

1st is, the person and character of him who is the object of your profession, "Jesus the Son of "God." The christian has no reason to be ashamed of his Master, nor of any of the warmest and steadiest expressions of attachment he can make to him; for his service reflects the highest honour on him who pays it—"Jesus the Son of "God." What a precious cluster of arguments in these short words!—The Saviour Emanuel—God with us—God manifested in the flesh—God made man, on purpose to be the Saviour of mankind. What heart does not feel the constraining power of such a motive as this?—O compassionate Redeemer, condescending Son of God Most High! touch our cold, lifeless hearts, draw us

to thyself with these "cords of love, these bands "of a man;" we are not ashamed of thee, nor of thy Gospel; we rejoice in thee, as the mighty God, both our first and second Creator; both "the Author and Finisher of our faith." We rejoice in thee as God-man, veiling the brightness of the Father's glory under the humble garb of human flesh and blood—"in the form of a ser- "vant made of no reputation; becoming obedi- "ent unto death, even the death of the cross; "wounded for our iniquities, bruised for our "transgressions." O let us never hide our faces from thee and thy cause, who didst not "hide "thy face from shame and spitting for us. God "forbid that we should glory, save in thy cross."

The 2d motive is, Christ's office and relation to us—"A great high priest, who by one offering, "that of himself, hath perfected for ever them "that are sanctified." It is this relation of Christ to us, which gives life and value to our profession, and renders it acceptable in the sight of God. How steady and affectionate should our adherence be to him, who assumed this important character purely for our sakes; and supported it till, being made perfect, and "perfect through sufferings," he became "the author and finisher of our faith." This argument is set in a variety of the most

beautiful lights by the Apostle in the six succeeding chapters of this Epistle. As "a high "priest touched with a feeling of our infirmities" —as "having compassion on the ignorant"— a "priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" —"a surety of a better Testament"—"able to "save to the uttermost them who come unto God "by him"—"a high priest holy, harmless, un- "defiled, and separate from sinners"—"a mini- "ster of the sanctuary"—as "having obtained a "more excellent ministry"—and, to crown all, "a great high priest passed into the heavens."— Which is a

3d motive to the holding fast our profession. In this view of the Son of God, we have a perfect security against both our own weakness, and the violence and malice both of devils and men.—Behold Jesus, "for the suffering of "death, crowned with glory and honour, mak- "ing continual intercession for us;" dispensing the gifts and influences of his holy Spirit, whereby he is preparing his people for a participation with him of the same heavenly glory. What a motive to stedfastness does this consideration afford!—"Because I live, ye shall live also.—Lo, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of "the world. If any man sin, we have an

" advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the " righteous." What a pleasant warfare is that which is insured of success!—" Be ye therefore " stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the " work of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know your " labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." Amen.

SERMON III.

REV. ii. 10. LAST CLAUSE OF THE VERSE.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

FOR THE EVENING OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON PERSEVERANCE IN RELIGION.

THIS, my brethren, is the advice, and this the promise, of "Him who is the first and the last, "who was dead and is alive," to the distressed, persecuted Church in Smyrna—and such is the refreshing, strengthening cordial, he is now putting into your hands, that ye also may "rejoice "in hope of the glory of God, being strong "through the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Our great Lord and Master, the Captain of our salvation, has this day been receiving our public homage as our sovereign, our solemn oath of subjection and fidelity as the leader and commander of his people, and is sending us away on our warfare, with a command for our direction, and a gracious word of promise for our encouragement; and in the conclusion of this solemn

service, my business, in his good providence, and by his grace, is, to explain that command and promise, and to urge you, through almighty aid, to live henceforward under the influence of both the one and the other, as the true and suitable improvement of the important service you have just been employed in.—I am,

I. Then to explain the precept in the text—"Be thou faithful unto death."—And in the

1st place, this precept evidently implies trial, danger, conflict. In order to prove fidelity, there must be a field whereon to exercise it: and here both the care and kindness of our Master are eminently conspicuous; his care in forewarning us of our danger; his kindness in teaching us how to surmount it. It is the part of an ignorant, an inexperienced, and an inattentive general, to possess his soldiers with a persuasion of the enemy's weakness or indolence, which has the effect of relaxing discipline, and begetting a careless, secure temper; and this not seldom ends in a surprise and a defeat. Whereas, it is the part of a wise and prudent one to habituate those under his command to observe unremitting discipline; to account no danger small; no foe contemptible; no situation absolutely safe; for

he knows that danger is in exact proportion to carelessness of it; that a child may kill a giant, if he is disarmed and asleep; that a Sampson may be overpowered by a Dalilah, after he has suffered her to discover where his strength and where his weakness lies. Fidelity then, in this view, consists in being ever on our watch tower; ever under our arms; ever prepared for giving or receiving an attack, according as our Captain calls upon us to act—in all things preferring his will and his wisdom to our own. But in the

2nd place, the precept implies not only conflict, but a constant, continued, lasting conflict—a strife which death only can terminate. "Be "thou faithful unto death;" that is, never account the trial of thy faithfulness at an end, so long as thou art in the world; never till death come and give thee thy discharge, or rather, stand thou firm and unshaken in thy allegiance and fidelity, whatever kind, or whatever degree of danger or distress threaten; yea, though death itself be the apparent, the certain consequence. The trial which thou art called to undergo, O christian, is both sharp and long; it is of the same nature with that which thy blessed Lord endured, whose love was "strong as death," and with that which his saints and martyrs of old

endured, who "were in great tribulation," and "loved not their lives unto the death." Not that the hand of violence, or the sword of persecution, actually and immediately threaten life and substance; but the express command of Him whom this day ye openly called Lord and Master, threatens the life and being of thy lusts. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and "cast it from thee:" thy darling pride, or more beloved covetousness, and all the other horrid progeny of the carnal mind, which are the very life blood of unrenewed nature, must be drawn off drop by drop, till none remain, however reluctant thy nature. A malicious world may threaten the life of thy reputation, stripped of which, life is hardly desirable. Thou mayest be called to wear a fool's coat, a gorgeous robe, for thy Master's sake; and to suffer the loss of a "good name," which "is rather to be chosen than "great riches:" nay, thy bread, the staff of thy life, may literally be affected, and ghastly poverty stare thee in the face, with shame, its rueful companion. The time may come when with thy Saviour, and for thy Saviour, thou mayest be without a place where to lay thy head; and can there be a severer trial of faith than when stern want, and the most irresistible cravings of nature press hard on the one hand, and sterner, inflexi-

ble duty on the other? Or, should you escape this, a more formidable foe, if one more formidable there can be, is still behind: "For we "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers "of the darkness of this world, against spiritual "wickedness in high places*;" enemies whose resentment is implacable; whose vigilance is unwearied; whose cunning is that of the serpent; whose fury is as the raging of the lion; and whose malice can never be fully glutted, but by the death of the immortal soul. Such, O believer, is the severity, such the danger, such the duration of the fiery trial of thy fidelity. These things then pre-supposed, the precept implies, in the

3d place, a deliberate choice, after fairly counting the cost, and a firm, deliberate adherence to that choice. Our blessed Lord never meant to decoy men into his service, by a plausible, flattering representation of it, but fairly exhibited its worst, as well as its best side; proposed its cross, as well as its crown; its shame, as well as its glory. And you have this day, my brethren, voluntarily, and, I hope, cheerfully, enlisted into it; not rashly and ignorantly, but well-

* Eph. vi. 12.

advised, and aware of its consequences. You have said that the word and will of Christ shall ever be welcome to you, at whatever season, and in whatever form they come; that you will receive with equal thankfulness from his hand the pleasant cordial or the bitter pill; that you will follow him with equal cheerfulness to the combat or to the triumph; that you will daily and always appear in his livery, whether the world reverence it or despise it. Though bonds and afflictions may be threatened and inflicted by his and your enemies, you have learned to say with his apostle, "None of these things move me, "neither count I my life dear unto myself; so "that I may finish my course with joy."—"Who "shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, "or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we "are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, "in all these things we are more than conquerors "through him that loved us*." And as adversity cannot move me, so neither shall prosperity, shake my loyalty and faith, for "what things were "gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ

* Rom. viii. 35, 36, 37.

"Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the "loss of all things, and do count them but "dung, that I may win Christ*." And now, my dear friends, as you have, upon mature deliberation made this choice, your gracious Lord is in the text exhorting you to abide by it. "Be "thou faithful," you have embraced a good cause; forsake it not; you have chosen wisely and well, persevere even unto the end; you have enlisted under a victorious banner: "Watch ye, stand "fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." And in order to ascertain and manifest this choice, and adherence to it, the precept in the text may imply, in the

4th place, an habitual cherishing of sentiments of love and fidelity toward our heavenly Master. We can never serve him faithfully, of whom we think lightly: when we have made an unworthy choice, the shame and misery of it must ever be aggravated and embittered by reflection and by acquaintance. The more we are conversant with an unworthy object, the higher our disgust rises; on the contrary, nothing is so pleasant as to reflect on a prudent, well-advised determination, when every day's knowledge and experience justifies and applauds the choice. A

* Phil. iii. 7, 8.

master's worth is the good servant's pride and honour. The christian, then, in order fully to reconcile his heart to the hardest parts of his master's service, has but to reflect— Whom do I serve? whom have I chosen for my Lord? To whom do I owe, to whom have I promised faithfulness and obedience? A Master, whom it is at once my duty, my interest, and my glory, to love and honour—a Master who rescued me from the bitterest of all bondage, at the price of his own most precious blood—a Master who solicits my service, not to promote his, but my own happiness—a Master, who condescends to call me, not servant, but friend; who admits me to his counsels, gives me a place at his table, cherishes me in his bosom—a Master, who not only promises, but pays; and whose rewards are, like himself, noble, princely; such as are suitable for him to give, rather than for me to receive— a Master so high as to claim of right the homage of all the kings and potentates of the earth, nay, the prostrate adoration of all the angels in heaven, and yet so humble as, without detriment to his dignity, to dwell with peculiar complacency and delight with the humblest broken hearts and contrite spirits; who "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth "the need yout of the dunghill."—A Master who,

in compassion to my weakness, is graciously pleased to accept of a willing mind, and of his own free grace bestows upon me "both to "will and to do of his good pleasure." And does this Master, so great, so good, call upon me to be faithful? O that my ability were equal to my desire of pleasing him, what occasion would I shun of declaring how much I loved Him who first loved me? "O Lord, thou knowest all things, thou "knowest that I love thee;" and my love shall make me faithful, and my faithfulness, thine own work, thou wilt gloriously reward.

5thly. As the command in the text enjoins sentiments, so likewise does it require acts of duty and fidelity: as the heart should be warm, so the hands should not be idle: a sluggish servant cannot possibly be a faithful servant. A patient suffering of the will of Christ is indeed chiefly recommended to the christians of Smyrna in the text and context; but we find the divine Author of these epistles to the seven Asiatic churches uniformly, in all his epistles, taking notice of, and either approving or condemning their works also; and the very idea of faithful includes both the one and the other. Fidelity is not a nice, frugal, niggardly principle, but a liberal and a generous one, and will not stand perpetually questioning about

duty, but run instantly and do it. Its language is, "for what purpose were my tongue and lips "given me, but to speak aloud the praises of him "who hath called me out of darkness into his mar- "vellous light, that I might tell to all around me "what the Lord has done for my soul." Why have I feet and hands, but to walk, to run in the paths of his commandments, and to work his work? Why am I endowed with life and motion, denied to the clods of the valley and the stones of the field? Why am I made "wiser than the beasts, "and endowed with more understanding than the "fowls of heaven," if it be not to devote those active, superior powers to the glory of Him who "breathed into my nostrils the breath of life, and "made me a living soul?" Can there be a more reasonable service, than to present all the members of my body, and all the faculties of my mind, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto "God."—Christian fidelity, my fellow-communicants, should manifest itself in every word, in every action. The formalist may, and often does, assume two different, opposite garbs; one for the house of God, and solemn occasions, such as this, and another for the world and common wear—like the effeminate, fair-weather soldier, who loves to glitter in scarlet on the parade in a time of peace, but is glad to resume a colour

more suitable to the pale complexion of his heart, when the corps is ordered to the bloody field; but the good soldier of Jesus Christ knows no suit, no colour but one; disdains the thought of affording ground so much as to question to whom he belongs; wears the same dress in the world which he does at the Lord's table. Will such an one, think ye, my brethren, sit still and be silent, when he hears his Master, his Prince, traduced, reviled? I think not. His commanded, his sworn fidelity, will constrain him, upon such an occasion, to speak and to testify. The laws of well-ordered civil societies justly call him a traitor, who hears treason without disclosing it—and can he be a loyal subject of the King of kings who can patiently hear him, and his laws, and his religion, lightly or evil spoken of? Can he in any sense of the word be called faithful, who regards the jest of the mocker, the song of the drunkard, the impious sneer of fools, more than his own duty, and his master's honour? But in the

Sixth and last place, the precept in the text must be understood in a consistence and connection with these and such like explanatory precepts: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ "Jesus." Run with patience your christian race, *looking unto Jesus:* "Be strong in the Lord and

"in the power of his might." Our being and continuing faithful must necessarily depend upon his grace and strength, without whom we can do nothing. The experienced treachery and deceitfulness of our own hearts in times past may have to conviction taught every one of us how unsafe it is to lean to our own understanding, or strength, or resolution—that every attempt we pretend to make, independent of God, must miscarry; that even the work of grace in the heart, when it presumes to take precedence of the great Worker, may, must mislead, instead of directing. Would we then steadily, uniformly, approve our faith, let us ever make our great Lord and Master of our counsel, put our hearts in his hand, and on every emergency seek our resource in his sympathy and care. And here lies the excellency of evangelical above merely legal precepts: the commands of the law are killing and condemning through the weakness and corruption that are in us; the commands of the Gospel are quickening and strengthening, through the grace that is in Christ. The commands of the law only point out what we ought to be; the commands of the Gospel, being matter of promise, as well as of precept, actually do make us such. The law only aggravates our natural misery by mingling despair in

the cup; the Gospel, by introducing more than hope, has killed the poison, and made the bitter waters sweet—Are the saints called to be faithful, every difficulty is removed; they "obtain "mercy of the Lord to be faithful."—Are they called "to work out their own salvation, God "worketh in them."—Are they called to "grow "in grace, the Spirit himself helpeth their infirmi-"ties; God giveth the increase." Having thus endeavoured to explain our Lord's command in the text, I proceed in the

IId place, briefly to illustrate the promise annexed to it, "I will give thee a crown of life." And I would take notice, as I go along, how chaste and guarded the expression is. The reward is not annexed to the service as wages earned by it, but as a free gift conferred upon persons of such a character. When we have done all, and suffered all, we are still but unprofitable servants, still dependant on our Master's kindness, not our own merit: and, indeed, the great, the uniform object of this Gospel, which we profess to believe, is to magnify the riches of free grace, and to exclude all boasting on our part; to exalt the divine glory on the ruins of human pride. "Be thou faithful unto death," and what follows? Come with boldness and de-

mand? Nay, but "I will give thee a crown of "life." The glory of the noble and numerous company of faithful witnesses, who stand before the throne, is not garments dyed with the blood of their own martyrdom, but robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.—This being premised, I observe, in the

First place, that the reward promised is, in virtue of that promise, made absolutely certain. Had our faithful service been the prescribed condition of obtaining it, well might we have doubted, well might we have despaired; but now it rests upon a surer foundation, even the unchangeable word of "the faithful and true witness," and therefore let doubt and suspicion be given to the winds. This promise is guarded on all hands for the security and comfort of the believer: not only the divine truth and faithfulness are plighted for the performance of it, as in the text, but the almighty power of God is elsewhere wrapped around it, to make certainty doubly sure. "I "give unto them eternal life; and they shall "never perish, neither shall any man pluck them "out of my hand. My Father, which gave "them me, is greater than all; and no man is able "to pluck them out of my Father's hand*." And

* John x. 28, 29.

all this is confirmed by the unalterable love and goodness of the Saviour; for "having loved his "own which are in the world, he loveth them unto "the end:" and this is the love of God to a guilty world, that "whosoever believeth in Jesus, whom "he hath sent, should not perish, but have ever-"lasting life." Here then is more than one immutable thing, as the ground of a strong consolation to those who have fled "for refuge to the "hope set before them," and thus Deity, in all his glorious perfections, is concerned in the accomplishment of the promise. Let me only add, that Christ here promises what he has already purchased with his blood, and purchased for this very end:—"I am the good shepherd; the good "shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." He took part of our nature, of our flesh and blood, for this express purpose, "that through death he might "destroy him that had the power of death, that "is, the devil; and deliver them who, through "fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to "bondage*."—But, in the

Second place, as the manner and form of this glorious recompence of reward is solid and satisfying, so the matter of it is most excellent, most substantial, and entirely suitable both to the giver

* Heb. ii. 14, 15.

and to the receiver. "Life,"—"a crown of life." The choicest kind, of the choicest substance; the finest of the fine gold.—Immortality was originally the crowning gift of God to human nature, and completed the image of God in the soul of man. Sin's baleful, accursed poison, like that of less dangerous, less fatal serpents, penetrating into every corner of the heart, corrupted it in all its springs, and assimilated it to itself, rendering that immortality the heaviest of curses, which was designed to be the choicest of blessings. Here the grace of the Gospel, which has also an assimilating power, counteracts the woeful influence of sin, and restores eternal existence to its original quality, makes life once more a blessing. And what heart can conceive, what tongue describe, the thousandth part of the felicity contained in this promised crown of life. Is life, in its present state, life in a world of much depression, pain, and sorrow, life, unavoidably liable to death, a sweet and desirable thing? Is length of days, in the estimation of God himself, of such value as to be peculiarly held out as a motive to the keeping of one of the precepts of his law? Is the pleasing society of those we love the essence, the life of life?—O then what must life, a crown of life, be to the believer, when it raises him at once to royal and to immortal dignity?

What must life be in a state wholly and eternally exempted from sorrow, and crying, and pain? life unallayed by the fear of dying—life in the pure and perfect society of the dearest, happiest of friends, none of whom shall ever languish in sickness, droop under old age, or desert us by death—life, which shall conform us to the most glorious and happiest of all Beings, making us partakers of his glory, his happiness, his eternity—life, that "shall quicken these now vile bodies; "and fashion them like unto Christ's glorious "body," and exalt the whole man, soul and body, to a place with the Saviour on his resplendent throne? Happy, thrice happy he that loseth his life, who thus findeth it! How easy, how pleasant, does the command of the Saviour become, thus balanced, infinitely overbalanced, by his promise! How unworthy are "the sufferings of "this present time to be compared with the glory "which shall be revealed in us!" How light, present, momentary affliction, when weighed in the balance with "a far more exceeding and eter-"nal weight of glory!" Who would not rejoice in suffering shame, in suffering death, for his name, who repays it ten thousand fold in glory and immortality? "O death, where is thy sting? O "grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto

" God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus " Christ our Lord."—I am now, in the

IIId place, as the improvement of the subject, to direct and urge you, in a very few words, to live henceforward, through almighty aid, under the influence of this command, and this promise of our blessed Lord.—And it may be necessary, in the

First place, from what has been observed in illustration of this text, to direct you to the true notion of present, proper christian exercise; it consists in a patient enduring, a patient doing, and a patient hoping. The Gospel, as it respects the conduct of its professors, consists of precepts and of promises; it is neither all precept, nor all promise, but blends both together; and what God himself has joined, it becomes not man to separate. Our business is to believe and to obey; to obey because we believe. And it is the more necessary to admonish you of this, as practical attempts are too often made by persons of opposite characters and tempers, to sever the Gospel of Christ in twain, and to give the weight of the whole to that half which they have thought fit to assume. Some will needs have a religion all

comfort, that will give them as little to do, and as much to hope and to enjoy, as possible. Others cry up christianity as the best, the purest practical system of morality in the world, and will have it, that morals are only, at least chiefly, concerned in it. Now these are both right, but then they are only right by halves, and their plans must be united to make the system complete. The Gospel warrants no comfort, but what flows from the testimony of conscience bearing witness that we have "our conversation in "the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, by "the grace of God"—and gives countenance to no practice, however moral, that is not founded upon, subject to, and regulated by the faith that is in Christ Jesus. That we may obtain the crown, we must be faithful; that we may be faithful, our eyes must be fixed on the glorious recompence of reward. But,

2dly. As a farther improvement of the subject, let me direct you to make a short deliberation and an immediate choice, upon every occasion, when duty and sin, or the appearance of sin, come into competition. In this, as well as in some other cases, our first thoughts are the best—it is a dangerous thing to parley with temptation; for when the tempter has once got the ear,

he will most probably possess himself of all the rest. The soul that begins to deliberate whether or not to commit sin, is at least in very great danger of chusing amiss. It is an unwise thing to bring so combustible a matter as gunpowder within the reach of fire, though remotely. Puzzling cases in the christian life, I believe, are few—and even in these, the sooner we determine the better. By far the greater number are instantly obvious to the most ordinary discernment. Let the example of the virtuous Joseph teach us, on every occasion, to dismiss temptation at once, with "how can I do this "great evil, and sin against God?" The soldier, who thinks of desertion, is a deserter already. The subject, who so much as meditates a revolt, is already guilty of treason. The servant of Jesus must not be even suspected.

3dly. When the hour of trial and distress actually overtakes you—whither shall I direct you for relief? Shall I tell you that misery is common in the world, that it is unavoidable, that many are still more miserable than you; that it is unbecoming a wise man to be disturbed with what cannot be helped—shall I desire you to call up your manly reason to your assistance, or send you to the haughty, sullen stoic, to be taught,

that " pain is no evil?" Alas, this would be like Job's three friends, to insult, and not to comfort you. I will rather send you to the man according to God's own heart, who will tell you, from his own experience, that " it is good for me " that I have been afflicted; that I might learn " thy statutes*," or to the Apostle of the Gentiles, who, from a well known analogy, infers that " whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourg- " eth every son whom he receiveth †." With particular satisfaction I would send you to the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, who justifies his servants inference, by declaring to the Laodicean church, " as many as I love, I rebuke " and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent‡:" Who was himself, as " the captain of our salvation, " made perfect through suffering," and has, as it were, annihilated present things altogether, in the prospect of that " life and immortality, which " are brought to light by his gospel." Let your consolations, O christian, be derived only and ever from christian sources, and you will ever find them sufficient. Let your support, under suffering, be that of an eminent saint of God, the reflection, " that all you suffer is not hell, " but that it is all the hell you shall suffer." But I

* Ps. cxix. 71. † Heb. xii. 6. ‡ Rev. iii. 19.

cannot send you away, without directing you, in the

Fourth and last place, to the frequent and affectionate exercise of humble gratitude, that the trials of your faith are so slight and so few, compared to what others have felt, and do feel. O my brethren, how ought we to blush at our murmuring complaining hearts, when God dandles us, as it were, on the knee, as innocent babes, instead of scourging us with rods as obstinate rebellious slaves; when he puts the crown upon our head, instead of fixing the cross upon our back, as we justly deserve; when even our ingratitude, superadded to so much other guilt, does not restrain the course of his goodness. May God of his great mercy, make us all more thankful, more humble, and prepare us in all things for submitting to his high will, whether it be to do, or to suffer, or to enjoy, to live, or to die. And to his name be praise Amen.

SERMON IV.

Ps. lxxviii. 1—7.

Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.
Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us:
We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.
For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children;
That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children:
That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

FOR SABBATH EVENING AFTER SACRAMENT.

ON THE INSTRUCTION OF THE YOUNG AND THE IGNORANT.

OF the great numbers who have this day been spectators only of our great gospel solemnity, there are two classes which demand our particular attention. I mean the young and the ignorant: such as by reason of non-age are not yet able

sufficiently to comprehend the end and design of the Holy Sacrament; and such as by circumstances, peculiarly unfavourable, have been deprived of the means of knowledge. It is of the last importance, that both of these classes should be informed, and rightly informed, concerning this solemn service, as it is a key to the whole plan of redemption by Jesus Christ; as it opens an enquiry of all others most essential to happiness; an enquiry into the whole counsel of God respecting the human race, the word of salvation which we are commissioned and commanded to preach to every creature.

That this knowledge may be the more effectually conveyed to tender uninformed minds, suffer me, my dear fellow christians, to summon in your aid; let me call upon you, "who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious, to tell to others "what the Lord has done for your souls." Let me address myself in particular to you who are parents; whom the care of your little ones unites in the same labour of love with us: let me address you in behalf of the dear precious souls committed to your charge. You love them, you wish to see them prosperous, and happy, and wise. O be concerned to make them wise unto salvation: this is the only wisdom, the only happiness worth

possessing. Initiate them early into "the know-"ledge of the truth as it is in Jesus:" let their tender ears, let their opening minds drink in the wondrous story of redeeming love; repeat to them, and again repeat "the praises of the Lord, "and his strength, and his wonderful works that "he hath done;" that the rising generation, and one generation after another, till time shall expire, may hear, and know, and feel, and celebrate what Jesus has done for guilty men.

I do not mean, at present, to give an explication of every particular contained in the verses I have now read; neither do I mean to confine myself to their original purport, as respecting a particular church and people. I hope it will not be thought a gross deviation from their spirit and meaning, if I take occasion from this passage to urge upon a christian congregation, the vast importance of instructing those who are to fill our places when we are mingled with the dust of our forefathers, in the knowledge and practice of that holy faith, of which we have this day been making such a solemn profession. And,

I. I shall address communicants in general, and urge upon them this momentous concern.

II. I shall address parents, and press upon them their duty in this respect, with regard to their own children.

III. I shall address young communicants, and endeavour to impress their minds with the importance of the service they have been employed in, and give them a few directions for their future conduct.

IVth, and lastly, I shall address the young and ignorant.

I am, in the first place, to address communicants in general, and to urge upon them the importance of instructing the young and the ignorant in the knowledge of christianity. Suffer me, my brethren, to assume the words of the holy Psalmist, or rather of God himself, by the mouth of his prophet. "Give ear, O my people, to my "law, incline your ears to the words of my "mouth." That which ye have heard and known, "and received from your fathers," declare ye the same unto your children, and to all who shall come after you, "that they also may set their "hope in God, and not forget the works of God, "but keep his commandments." Blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear,

what many prophets, and kings, and righteous men desired to see and to hear, but were not so highly privileged as we who live in this remote corner of the earth, and "upon whom the ends of the world "are come." By the good hand of God upon us, christians, our lot has been cast in a land of civil and religious liberty; a land of gospel light and knowledge; a land in which God has long preserved a church and people for himself, and, we trust, he will preserve them. Not only so, but it has been our distinguished happiness to be born of sober, pious, christian forefathers, who studied, maintained, and practised the truth themselves, and were at pains to teach it to us: they are now no more; they have fulfilled their day; they are passed into an unseen world; they have surrendered up their charge; into our hands they have surrendered it, with this solemn admonition, See that you abuse, that you neglect it not; see that you exert yourselves with fidelity and zeal, in handing it down uncorrupted, unimpaired. The precious treasure of the Gospel is now lodged with us: and think, christians, think seriously what a vast trust this is—the trust of numberless myriads of precious souls, yet unborn, or but just entered upon life; of immortal beings, who, under God, depend upon you for their everlasting welfare: think of the infinite value

of so many, think of the infinite value of one, precious immortal spirit; consider that their all is committed to your care.

The principle of patriotism, or love to our native country, engages men to enter into schemes for the improvement, the safety, and the honour of the particular nation or kingdom to which they belong, with a view not only to its present but its future aggrandizement, with a view to consequences in which they themselves are to have no personal interest; but have not we, christians, a much higher object in view, than even the noblest spirit of patriotism can propose to itself—the happiness, the eternal happiness of numbers of our fellow creatures, who are but just rising into the light, and who look up to us for direction and for instruction. The principle of humanity engages men to care for the affairs of minors, of orphans, who are unable to conduct themselves. Consider the rising generation as so many minors and orphans; consider the Gospel of Jesus Christ as their inheritance, committed to your management, which against the years of maturity they will expect and require at your hands; that if you are unfaithful, they must be undone, and will lay their ruin to your charge. Can you conceive a blacker crime, than injuring

and defrauding, the helpless, the destitute? Would you avoid that crime clothed in its ugliest circumstances, be careful, be conscientious in managing the precious deposit of the Gospel for the behoof of posterity; in transmitting the word of life, the hope, the inheritance of the rising, and of every future generation.

You are placed as it were betwixt two worlds, surrounded on both sides by an awful eternity—a great part of your time is already gone; you must ere long quit the stage, and give place to your successors; the course of a few years must fill these walls with a new congregation of worshippers, while we occupy the adjoining mansions of the dead. And have you no concern about those who are to succeed you in the places where you now sit, who are to surround that table, when you are gone to a world of Spirits? Are you, can you be indifferent, whether the next age be a race of christians or not? Have you no zeal for the interests of a Redeemer's kingdom, no desire that it should flourish and prosper, when you are gone down to the house of deep forgetfulness? If you have, O exert yourselves as you have influence, as you have opportunity, to recommend the Saviour, to spread the knowledge of Jesus, to "celebrate the honours of

children, no doubt. For what do you go to sea, and encounter so many dangers, and hardships, and disquietudes there? For what do you go through the streets at all seasons, and in all weathers? For what do you toil in your compting-houses and shops? For what do you rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness? You will readily answer me, for the good of your children; in order to make provision for their future welfare. You do well in so doing—the object is great and glorious—you do but your duty. But suffer me to ask further: What is it you mean to procure for your children? What is your desire and wish concerning them? Is it that they may be rich, and great, and wise, in this world—that they may be distinguished, and make a figure among the sons of men? Poor creatures! if that is all you have in view, if this is the height of your ambition, how much are they to be pitied. Will the wisdom, or the grandeur, or the riches of a present world, answer the demands of a rational, immortal soul? will they yield comfort at a dying hour? will they save in the day of wrath? You know well, they will not. You are, perhaps, at pains to procure for them the best, the most fashionable, the genteelest education you can; are anxious to have them possessed of the most useful and

necessary qualifications you can think of, in this age of pleasure, and dissipation, and extravagance; I will not say, of some that are less useful, or vicious—but is it thus you fulfil the solemn engagements you came under, when you presented them to God in baptism? Is this to make them christians? Some of you, perhaps, have brought your children up with you to the house of God this day; some of them have, it may be, for the first time, witnessed this solemn service: their curiosity will no doubt be raised; they will probably be asking you the meaning of these things; indulge, encourage a spirit of inquiry in them: study the motions of their tender minds. Their hearts are now most susceptible of soft impressions, most disposed to retain and improve them; a fabulous distress often draws from their eyes the tear of compassion, and their breasts heave with the sigh of sympathy. From what a glorious source is it in your power to draw forth their tears and sighs! what a tender tale of innocence, and compassion, and friendship, and love, and suffering, does the history of Jesus of Nazareth afford! let it be the frequent subject of your conversation with them.

Let me call upon you, mothers; you have the best opportunities, you have the readiest access

to their hearts—to you the complaints are commonly made, and the petitions preferred, and the inquiries addressed. Do I need to plead with you in behalf of the dear little ones, whom you carried so long in your wombs, whom you suckled at your breasts, whom you watched over in infancy with such anxious unremitting care, of whom you form such fond, perhaps extravagant hopes. To your honour I must say, that religion is more frequently to be found among you than in the parents of the other sex; improve then your opportunities, improve your influence, show that you are mothers indeed. Are there any here who have fatherless, any who have motherless children, any who have the charge of orphans? there is upon you, who have charges of this kind, a double, a tenfold obligation to care, diligence, and zeal. Call them around you, pray over them, tell them in language suited to their tender capacities, that they are formed for eternity; tell them of the sin and misery of all mankind by nature—of the evil, the danger of continuing in sin, of the beauty and happiness of sincere unfeigned piety and holiness; tell them of the necessity of a Saviour, in order to pardon and acceptance with God. Open up to them the life and character of Jesus—the end of his coming into the world, and the nature of faith

in him: explain to them the necessity and nature of true repentance, press all upon them, from the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death and judgment: dwell particularly upon the history of the Redeemer, the dignity of his character, the purity and simplicity of his manners, the eminent virtues of his life, his painful and unmerited sufferings, the remarkable circumstances of his death. They will listen to all this with wonderful attention; they will soon come to understand how deeply they themselves are interested; they will early acquire the most useful of all knowledge: let it be your business to direct this knowledge immediately to practice. Let me beseech and intreat you, fathers and mothers; let me obtest you as in the presence of Almighty God, to whom you are accountable, to study your children's everlasting welfare. By the divine blessing, their improvement will amply repay all your pains and care; it will be an excellent mean for bettering your own hearts, for promoting your own growth in the spiritual life. Can imagination paint a more delightful scene than such a family as this—this is heaven itself—the happy parents joining hand in hand in training up the dear pledges of their love to glory and virtue; securing for them treasures in heaven; laying a good foundation for

the time to come, even "an inheritance that "is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not "away;" raising up a seed to serve God and support his kingdom in the world, after their course is finished, after they are laid in the dust:—happy, thrice happy children, who are born of such parents.—I am loth to present you with this picture reversed.—I will not do it.—But is it not melancholy, my fellow christians, is it not awful, O my God, to think that there are families, that there are parents, who care for none of these things? I am in the

Third place to address young communicants, with a view to impress their minds with the importance of this day's service, and to give them a few directions for their future conduct. Consider, my friends, the character you now bear—ye are the seed of the church, the hope of the succeeding age. You have this day taken an important step toward eternity, a step which, according as it is followed out, will determine the whole of your future state. You have this day been avouching the Lord to be your God, and Jesus to be your Saviour. You are now become christians by your own voluntary deed; you have set your faces heavenwards; you have turned your backs upon the world; you

have solemnly renounced it as your chief good, and are set out in quest of "another country, that "is an heavenly." You have, perhaps, this day been enabled to say with ardour and sincerity of heart, "this is none other than the house of "God, this is the very gate of heaven." Henceforth we will never go back; we will think of, we will seek after nothing else. "What shall now "separate us from the love of Christ? We are "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor an-"gels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things "present, nor things to come, shall separate us "from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus "our Lord." I would not wish to check this holy ardour, but rather encourage it. Only I must warn you, that probably, that certainly it will not always continue in the same lively exercise; your affections will necessarily cool; they will be diverted by inferior objects—the world will in spite of you, recur. I warn you of this, that you may neither be discouraged nor disappointed, when such is the case; that you may hence draw no unjust inferences to the discredit of religion. The fault is not in religion, it is in yourselves—it is founded in human weakness. The want of comfort, which so many complain of, is owing to their own thoughtlessness and folly, to an indolent, uncautious

walk. To prevent this as much as may be, let me beg your attention to the few following directions.

1. Keep out of the way of temptation as much as possible. Youth is commonly rash, forward, and presumptuous: it depends too much upon itself; it expects every thing from itself; it despises danger, in a vain confidence of its own strength, and of consequence is ready without apprehension to rush into temptation, elated with the hopes of victory and triumph. Let me assure you, my young friends, from dear bought experience, that such confidence is the very height of extravagance—that the truest courage upon such occasions is to fly. Where nothing is to be gained, why will you hazard so much? The yielding a single step is the certain road to universal shameful defeat. Let me tell you, that a despised enemy is a dangerous enemy; that innocence itself is a weak defence against the attacks of pleasure and ambition and desire; that vanity and self confidence naturally tend to put the soul off its guard; that the wisdom of the serpent must be joined to the harmlessness of the dove—that you are never nearer falling, than when you think you stand surest. There can be no harm in keeping far

within your limits—there may be danger in advancing but a little beyond them.

2. When temptation is unavoidable, resist it uniformly. It is of great consequence to stand out at the beginning—the first onset frequently determines the fate of the battle. "Resist the devil, and "he will fly from you;" refuse compliance with wicked men, and they will cease their solicitations. Endure to be called stiff and singular and disobliging, rather than part with "the testimony "of a good conscience." The unmeaning applause and caresses of the giddy and the vain and the worthless will but ill repay the loss of it. By constancy and resolution, you will both preserve your virtue, and gain the love of the good and the wise, nay you will have the esteem of those very persons who would ensnare you; for many admire that virtue which they will not imitate; they know and approve the better course, while they pursue the worse. By yielding, you lose your peace of mind, you forfeit the good opinion of those who are the best judges of what is praise worthy, and you incur the ridicule and contempt of those who decoyed you from the right path; for it is the manner of all tempters, from Satan down to his lowest emissary, first to deceive, and then to torment. Learn

then, from what you have done this day, to put a negative into the hand of every temptation. "What, shall I do this great wickedness and sin "against God?"

3. Be particularly on your guard against gross outbreakings. A deep wound is long of filling up, is apt to fester, frequently brings on an incurable distemper, and at best leaves a scar or excrescence behind. In like manner, when the conscience is struck deep by any grievous excess, the cure is long and difficult—an indifference about lesser failings is the consequence—the heart is deadened to the impressions of religion—a habit of dissipation is acquired—a sense of character is lost, and with that, a sense of all that is good and great—a taste for vicious indulgence is acquired—the soul is ensnared, is lost. Or, supposing the best that can follow—there must be always a painful, a stinging remembrance of any gross misconduct; you will be constantly haunted with self-upbraidings; your self-approbation will be greatly diminished; you will be vexed to think that you have lost the esteem of all around you, even of the wicked, for this is ever the nature of conscious guilt, to join the want of self-esteem with the disesteem of the world—when you once

think meanly of yourself, you will naturally conclude, that every one else thinks in the same manner.

4. Beware of giving offence to others. Your conduct will be now more remarked than ever; and it will necessarily make an impression just as it is proper or the contrary. Your miscarriages will be all viewed now through a magnifying glass—your profession will make every part of your behaviour have a stronger effect. Is it not a desirable thing to be set up and recommended as a pattern of true goodness? Is it not detestable, with the most serious and solemn profession, to be pointed out as an example of hypocrisy and vice? You have two sorts of people watching over you: I need not tell you who they are—the one with a holy and affectionate jealousy, afraid lest you should fall; the other waiting with a malicious impatience to see you do disgrace to your character and profession: and will you gratify the hellish desires of such? will you disappoint the honest, disinterested joy of those who wish you well?

5. Beware of dropping your intercourse with heaven, by neglecting the duty of secret prayer. To give up this, is to give up every thing:

from the day that you cease to consider and practise this as a duty, you may date the decay and death of religion in the soul. You may not, perhaps, at all times enjoy the same liberty and warmth and comfort in this divine exercise; but you are by no means, from deadness and languor in your devotions, to draw an argument for the total neglect and omission of your duty; rather conclude thence the necessity of perseverance and importunity; "wait patiently "for the Lord, in his own good time he will in- "cline his ear, and give you both an heart to seek "him, and also the desire of your heart." And here I end my address to young communicants. I conclude in the

Fourth place, with briefly addressing the ignorant, and the young who are not yet become communicants. With regard to the first of these characters, the ignorant: I do not mean to upbraid you for your character, for which there is indeed too much ground—but that I believe is not the way to make you better. I would only caution you against that false shame which keeps so many in ignorance. It is no shame to acknowledge ignorance, to discover a desire to learn, to be better informed. It is a thousand times more shameful to continue in

that condition when the means of knowledge are at hand. I hope you are not so badly situated, as to have no neighbour or acquaintance who is both willing and able to teach you what it so much concerns you to know. Of this I am certain, you have free access to the house of God, to hear his word read and preached there; and let me tell you, that in these circumstances, ignorance will one day be a very poor plea; let me tell you, that if you continue in this state, you must be miserable, for wilful, obstinate ignorance is much the same as abused knowledge. Suffer me, therefore, with all earnestness and affection, to charge, exhort, beseech you, as in the presence of Almighty God, as you love your own souls, to trifle no longer with matters of such moment. Give yourselves no rest till your minds are in some measure enlightened in the truth as it is in Jesus. If you cannot read the Holy Scriptures yourselves, look about you; I am confident that, if you are at pains, you will find some one who both can and will perform this friendly office for you. This much is in your own power; you can go to God with your case; you can ask wisdom of him who "giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not," and it shall be given you; if you have the desire, you will assuredly find the means. And now, my

dear little ones, whom I love in the Lord Jesus, let me address a few words to you; let me intreat your attention. Perhaps you think you have little or no business here, but to attend your parents and relations, and to dress in your best clothes, and to see what is going on. Well, and what have you observed to-day? Probably you had a curiosity to see the Sacrament, and importuned your parents for liberty to go to church for that purpose. But have you no curiosity to know the meaning of all that you have seen? I dare say you have. Have you not read in your Bibles of Jesus of Nazareth? the wisest, the kindest, the best person that ever lived in the world? who loved all men, and did so much good to them? how he healed all that were sick? how he made the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk? how he loved little children, and took them in his arms and blessed them? Have you not heard, or read, how ill he was used by a wicked, stupid, cruel people, called the Jews? how they spit upon him, and struck him, and scourged him with rods, and pierced his head with a crown of thorns, and, at last, nailed him hand and foot to a cross, and left him to die in the most horrid pain and torment? And do you know that he suffered all this for you and me?

to preserve us from suffering, to preserve us from the pain of everlasting fire, from being for ever tormented in hell by the devil and his wicked angels? I am sure you cannot but love one, who has loved you so much, and has done so much for you, and saved you from such terrible sufferings. Let me tell you likewise then, that it was this same Jesus who has done you and me and all of us so much good, who commanded us to eat bread, and drink wine, as you saw done in the forenoon, that it might always put us in mind of his great love to us. The love of little ones, such as you, is particularly agreeable to him, for he still loves little children now he is in heaven, and wants them to come unto him, that he may bless them and do them good. Do you know that Jesus Christ is to come into the world again, and you shall see him come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and all his holy angels with him; and then, if you have been good and loved him, he will take you up with him into heaven, and make you completely happy: but if you have been wicked and graceless, he will condemn you to endless pain, and send you into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? And now, surely, you would rather

chuse to be good, and forsake every wicked course, and be for ever happy, than follow that way which leads to everlasting misery. Begin then to live and be religious together. The Lord hath promised, "they that seek me early "shall find me: remember thy Creator, remember thy Redeemer, in the days of thy youth. "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will "teach you the fear of the Lord: keep thy tongue "from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; "depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and "pursue it."

Let me now conclude with calling upon myself, and my hearers of every denomination, to remember the "great and terrible day of the "Lord," to remember our present situation, and the connection it has with eternity. The place we now inhabit is surrounded, is strewed with the ashes of our fellow creatures, with the dust of many who shall rise to "glory, honour, and "immortality, eternal life;" and the time is at hand when we shall every one of us "stand before "the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account "of the deeds done in the body, whether they be "good or evil." To that awful day I refer you and myself. May God give all of us, in our various

stations and relations, grace to be faithful and honest, zealous and diligent, that we may abound more and more in every good word and work, to do his will, and to his name be praise, Amen.

SERMON V.

LUKE ii. 6, 7.

And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

PREPARATION FOR THE COMMUNION.

ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

WAS ever wonderful event related with such charming, touching simplicity? Was ever object so affecting presented to the human mind? Let us turn aside a little to consider it. Behold majesty fallen! Royalty in indigence and rags! The issue of David, king of Judah and Israel, in Bethlehem the city of David, destitute of the ordinary accommodations of an inn! A delicate woman, forced, in the very close of pregnancy, from her home; constrained to undertake a long and painful journey, unpossessed of almost every thing that could alleviate its fatigue and

distress; advancing by long and painful degrees to the residence of her fathers—but not to repose exhausted nature in the lap of ease; not to deposit the anxieties of approaching childbirth in the bosom of a fond mother; not to present to the world the heir of a throne in the state and splendour of kings—but to know the heart of a stranger, but to feel the bitterness of neglect, but to be stabbed with the dagger of inhumanity. "There was no room for them in the inn." The inevitable hour overtakes her—the days are accomplished, that she must be delivered. "And she "brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped "him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." Common humanity interests us in all this: but when we consider, who is this Child born, this Son given, every chord in our frame is touched, every power of imagination is awakened, our hearts burn within us—reason expatiates, soars, trembles, sinks, overwhelmed, confounded. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh." What extremes united! what a spectacle of wonder to angels and men! who "can, by searching, find out God? "who can find out the Almighty to perfection? O "the breadth and length; O the depth and height "of the love of Christ, it passeth knowledge."

An event which presented the world with an union so astonishing, behoved to be marked with corresponding characteristics of splendour and obscurity, of magnificence and meanness. Accordingly, universal nature announces the appearance of its God, while poverty and depression attempt to conceal the man.

I shall endeavour to select and contrast a few of those striking circumstances which attended the birth of the Saviour of the world—which adorn and illustrate that glorious era, that "beginning of days," that "fulness of time," when the Son of God, for our salvation, became the Son of Man.

1. Then, I behold the Man Christ Jesus, lying hid in the reputed son of the carpenter, adorned with no hereditary honours, introduced with no trumpet sounding before him, with no herald proclaiming a pompous catalogue of lofty titles, and advancing a claim in his behalf, to a place among the gods of the earth—but in the very vale of obscurity, unknown, unheeded of men—an outcast from society—exposed to all that hard-heartedness and indifference make silent indigence to suffer. Who cares about a new-born infant in a stable at Bethlehem of Judah,

whose parents are so unconnected, that not a house in the city will open to let them in, and so poor, that the stern publican frowns them unfeelingly from his door? The city itself is now of no account—the very nation is well nigh dissolved—the glory is departing, to return no more for ever. But, on the other hand, I see the whole Roman empire in motion—I see Augustus Cæsar by his decree agitating a world—the greatest prince on earth, unknowingly, undesignedly, employing his authority in the service of that neglected babe in yonder manger—the master of imperial Rome constrained to do homage at the feet of the infant Jesus. I see the nations stirred together, I see myriads upon myriads hastening every one to his place—I see the heart of Augustus swell at the apprehended greatness, opulence, populousness, of his immense dominions—and for what end is all this? Christians, that ye might have strong consolation, that ye "might know the certainty of those "things wherein ye have been instructed"—that it might be ascertained to all generations, when, and where, and in what circumstances, the Captain of our salvation made his entrance on the grand theatre of the world—that the circumstances of one family, amidst all the families of the Roman Empire, might be known universally

and recorded for ever. O mighty Cæsar, thou hast not attained thy own design, but thou hast executed the decree of the Eternal. Thou hast not been able to transmit to posterity the number of thy subjects, the splendour of thy triumphs, the wealth of thy provinces, the glory of thy kingdom—but without intending it, thou hast conveyed to the human race, knowledge infinitely more interesting and important; namely, that in the days when God raised thee to the throne of the world, he sent forth his own Son to save the world. Behold one display of the majesty of the God—of the humbleness of the man.

2dly. While the earth is withholding from its Lord, when he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, its common produce, or dispensing it in the scantiest measure and homeliest form—while Judea, the land of his nativity, is treating him as an alien—while the great and the wise of his own nation are too busy, or too careless, to attend to the times, and the signs—while Herod is aiming a direct blow at his life—behold the face of heaven is changed, *his* star appears in the East, a new created light, not moving in the direction, nor according to the stated tenour of the other heavenly bodies, but kindled on pur-

pose, in motion or at rest, according to a law of its own, and which, after having marked out the place, where the young child was, is for ever extinguished. Behold a foreign land is preparing for him its peculiar treasure, and pours its gold and frankincense and myrrh at his feet —behold the wise and the great are summoned from afar, to acknowledge and to worship him whom all nature pointed out, whom all nations desired—behold Egypt shelters the persecuted infant from the wrath of an incensed king. Wretched priests, and lawyers, and scribes of Judah, ye remain in darkness, through excess of light! He comes to his own, and his own receive him not. Wretched philosophers of Greece, by wisdom ye know not God!—the doctrine of a Saviour in an humble form is to you, foolishness. Wretched Herod, to think of crushing him whom ancient prophecy exalted to the kingdom. Happy sages of the East, occupied in the study of nature and nature's laws, that you may attain the knowledge and love of nature's God! I behold you leap for joy at sight of the new-born star—ye are not disobedient to the heavenly vision—ye follow the ethereal guide, and are rewarded with a sight of your Saviour and your Lord. Blessed Jesus! in thy submission to the contempt of Jews and Greeks, I see the humility of the man, who

" made himself of no reputation"—in thy acceptance of the adoration of eastern magi, the majesty of " him who thought it not robbery to be " equal with God."

3dly. Can we help observing and contrasting the lowly scene which the stable presents, with the magnificent exhibition which the celestial regions display? There the darkness and silence of night involving the humble roof, the unregarded family, in deep forgetfulness—here the shades dispelled, not by the light of the sun, brought back by so many degrees, as once upon the dial of Ahaz, but by the glory of the Lord shining in its strength. There the beasts of the field retired for shelter—here the sons of light descending from their thrones to give testimony to him in whose light they shine. There the lowing of oxen, mixing with the soft murmurs of maternal love—here loud acclamations from angelic tongues, " praising God, and " saying, glory to God in the highest, and on " earth, peace, good-will, towards men."—And what shall we say more? There, a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, here, legions of flaming ministers, arrayed in robes of immortality, bringing all their glory and honour unto him. Earth sleeps, but heaven is awake—the tongues of men are

still, but the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy. When we converse with the inhabitants of the stable, what is our reflection? "Surely this is bone of our "bone, and flesh of our flesh—in all things he is "made like unto his brethren—as the children "are partakers of flesh and blood, he also him-"self likewise took part of the same." When we join the company of the shepherds, and behold the glory of the Lord, and converse with angels, we cannot refrain from crying out, "Sure-"ly this is the Son of God. He is our Lord, and "we will worship him."

4thly. On the one hand we may observe, that most mournful and most mortifying of human objects, a fallen, an extinguished royal line, a departing, departed sceptre—the throne of David and of Solomon levelled with the ground: on the other, from its ruins arising "a king-"dom which cannot be moved—an universal and "an everlasting kingdom of righteousness, and "peace, and joy. A branch growing out of the "root of Jesse, under whose shade the nations "shall repose, to which the Gentiles shall seek, "and whose rest shall be glorious." Thus, thus it is spoken in prophetic vision by Isaiah: "Unto "us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and

" the government shall be upon his shoulder,
" of the increase of his government and peace
" there shall be no end; upon the throne of
" David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and
" to establish it with judgment and with justice;
" from henceforth even for ever—the zeal of the
" Lord of Hosts will perform this." And thus it is accomplished in the fulness of time, and thus applied to the holy child Jesus, by the voice of the angel Gabriel: " Behold, thou shalt conceive
" in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt
" call his name Jesus; he shall be great, and shall
" be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord
" God shall give unto him the throne of his father
" David, and he shall reign over the house of Ja-
" cob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be
" no end."

In the ruin of David's kingdom we behold the instability of human things, the vanity of this world's grandeur—in the establishment, the progress, and the duration of the dominion of Messiah, David's son, yet David's Lord—the unchangeableness of heaven—the great realities of eternity. When I see Abraham's seed, the heir of the promise, without a place where to lay his head, I weep to think of the sad reverses to which human life is exposed—I mourn over the wastes and ravages

of time; but when I behold from the thick gloom which overspreads that obscure retreat, a light breaking forth, to enlighten the Gentiles—advancing with increasing lustre to the perfect day—a day which knows no evening—I rejoice to think that "the counsel of the Lord "shall stand, and the purpose of his heart to a "thousand generations"—that "though Israel be "not gathered, the kings of the nations see and "arise, and princes also worship, because of the "Lord that is faithful, and the holy one of Israel" —that "though Jerusalem be laid on heaps," there is provided for us, "a city which hath foun- "dations, whose builder and maker is God."

Lastly, Nothing is apparently more unimportant to the world, and of which the world is actually more regardless, than the lowly personages at Bethlehem—their names have got into the genealogical rolls, and that is all—it is known that they belonged to the city, and were of the house and lineage of David; and all the advantage that now accrues to them from a distinction so honourable, is the necessity of travelling to their paternal residence in very incommodious circumstances, merely to have their names enrolled. But we may remark, by way of

contrast, that every circumstance connected with the birth of Jesus Christ, the most minute, the most ordinary, was the subject of prophecy, and reduced into effect by an extraordinary interposition of divine providence. The eye of God watches over this event with peculiar attention; the finger of God points it out with special precision. It is a light thing to see Augustus Cesar issuing a decree—to see Herod alarmed—to see the sages of the East in motion—to see the azure vault embellished with a new light, or even to hear the acclamations of the heavenly Host. Behold the great God himself deliberating, speaking, executing. What an immense distance of time from the day when it was said to the old serpent, who deceived the mother of mankind, "I will put enmity be-"tween thee and the woman, and between thy "seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, "and thou shalt bruise his heel," to that in which it was "revealed to Simeon by the Holy Ghost, "that he should not see death before he had seen "the Lord's Christ"—but the long interval is filled up with manifestations of the same object "at "sundry times, and in divers manners," and the whole series of events conducted in subserviency to the execution of this great design of the eternal

mind. The name of the child born, shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the "Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Christ must be born at Bethlehem of Judah—because thus it was predicted upwards of seven centuries before, and thus it was universally understood by the college of chief priests and scribes at Jerusalem, as we find from their response to Herod, when he was roused into inquiry by the question of the wise men: Christ must be born of a virgin mother, "that it might be fulfilled which was "spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall "bring forth a son, and they shall call his name "Emmanuel—God with us." Christ must speedily flee into Egypt, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord: "Out of Egypt "have I called my Son." And in every other instance, we may observe, that whoever were the subordinate agents—whatever their motives or their ends in their conduct toward the Lord of life—they brought to pass that alone which the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God had appointed—"for of a truth," to use the words of that animated address of the first christians, "against thy holy child Jesus, whom "thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius

" Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of " Israel, were gathered together to do whatso- " ever thy hand and thy counsel determined " before to be done."

Christians, " ye have seen the grace of our Lord " Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, for our " sakes became poor;" you have seen to what poverty, and meanness, and contempt, he voluntarily and cheerfully submitted. It was, that you might learn humility, and acquiescence in the allotments of providence, and to make a just estimate of human things, and to refer glory and shame to their proper objects. O when shall the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus begin to think, that humbleness in their circumstances, and the neglect or frowns of the world, are in themselves no disgrace, because they are not in themselves sinful—and that title, wealth, and place, are honourable only, when they are acquired by virtue, enjoyed with wisdom and moderation, adorned by humbleness of mind, and devoted to God and goodness?

Christians, ye have seen the brightness of that glory which dispelled the cloud wherein the birth of your Saviour was enveloped—ye have seen

self-evident proofs of a present Deity. What then may you not reasonably expect from him who has the universe at his disposal, whose will, legions of angels obey, and who was born into the world to save you from your sins, and to conduct you to heaven? When you consider the humiliation of the Son of God, surely you cannot descend too low—when you behold his glory, you cannot aspire too high.

In that wonderful picture we have been contemplating—that astonishing combination and mixture of light and shade, we have a striking representation of the christian life—and a powerful argument to connect high and heavenly thoughts with lowness of condition. "It doth not now appear what the chris-"tian shall be—his life is at present hid with "Christ—but his conversation is in heaven—"his affections are set on things above—and "yet a little while, and the cloud shall dis-"perse, and he shall arise and shine—when "Christ his life shall appear, he shall appear "with him in glory, he shall be like him, for he "shall see him as he is." Christian, thou art "a stranger upon earth," but withal, a citizen of heaven—despised of men, but accepted

of God—a child of dust, but an heir of glory. —" destitute of every thing, yet possessing all " things—dead, but behold thou livest "—a partaker of Christ's cross, but ere long to be a sharer of his crown. Which God grant to us all. Amen.

SERMON VI.

Luke, ii. 6, 7.

And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

FOR THE EVENING OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

THERE are so many things in human life to remind us that we are travellers, that it is matter both of wonder and of concern that we should so often forget our condition so far as to imagine ourselves at home. It is equally affecting to think, that the accommodations of the road, according as they are agreeable or otherwise, should occasion so much satisfaction on the one hand, or produce so much peevishness and discontent on the other. Are they not passing away with equal rapidity? Are they not the appointments of a father's wisdom and love?

Are we not hastening to our father's house, to our everlasting home, where the enjoyments and the disappointments of the way will be recollected with equal delight, as having equally contributed to wisdom, to improvement? It surely could not be without design, that the Saviour of the world, was born at an inn—was possessed of no settled habitation of his own—subsisted upon the bounty of others. The great lessons of contentment, and patience, and superiority to the world, and cheerful resignation to the determinations of providence, are by this one example, a thousand times more forcibly inculcated, than by all the stateliness and pride of philosophy—by all the sourness of misanthropy — by all the sullenness and spleen of disappointed ambition. And is it not of importance, that men should be instructed in such lessons as these? lessons so intimately connected with the happiness of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come. And was it necessary, condescending, compassionate Redeemer! that in order to convey such instruction to us, thou shouldst become a tender babe—draw thy first breath in a stable—and pour out thy last upon a cross?—"even "so Lord, for so it seemed good in thy sight." I could not think of dismissing a subject so affecting and so useful as that of my text, by a single

discourse upon it. What I trust has afforded us pleasing meditation preparatory to a solemn commemoration of our Saviour's dying love, may also, through the blessing of heaven, suggest profitable reflections in the close of this solemn service, and preserve a powerful influence over those lives, which we have been devoting, under the most awful solemnities, to our God and Redeemer.

Let us then, my friends, take leave of this service, and improve this subject, by reflecting, in the first place, on the frivolousness, the folly, the madness of those contentions which distract the world—which multiply the dismal catalogue of human calamities, and banish from the earth somewhat of that little portion of felicity which it contains. Alas! what are men striving about? the best apartments of an inn—the slender and transient provision of a day, of a night—both the disappointed and the happy must depart in the morning. And are such passing things worth so much sweat and vehemence and blood? while we contend, we perish—the strife itself hastens on our latter end; while we fight about the accommodations of the road, the journey is concluded—and then war ceases, and one house is appointed for all living. If this were seriously

considered, would not men rather eat a meal, or sleep a night in the worst room, or step aside into the stable, than alarm the neighbourhood, and fire the house, to dispossess the more successful traveller, and occupy his place.

O earth, how poor, how unsatisfying a portion art thou! seeing thou art unequal to the wants, to the desires of so much as one immortal spirit, which, however ardently it may desire, however successfully pursue thee, finds itself still at a distance from bliss. Vain world—barren of real happiness—where the elevation of a brother depresses me—where the uncomplying disrespect of one poor Mordecai can blast the courtly joy of a proud Haman. Let me sleep or keep watch with the beasts of the field, rather than disturb the repose of "one of the least of these little "ones"—let me, with Israel, fetch a compass round the whole land of Edom, rather than cut myself a nearer road through the bowels of mine own mother's son—let me yield that I may overcome—let me subdue my own spirit, and what foe shall be able to withstand me? If there be no room for me on the great theatre, let me, with my Saviour, modestly retire into the shade, and leave the scramble for wealth, and glory, and power, to those who have not learned to weigh

the things of time in the balance of the sanctuary.

2dly. Let us learn not only to submit to, but to rejoice in the distinctions and varieties of condition, which a wise providence has established in the world. These are the appointment of God, else they would not exist. The absolute and universal equality of mankind is a chimera unwarranted by revelation, and flatly contradicted by fact and experience. When Jesus Christ came into the world, did he disturb civil society by an attempt to bring mankind to a level of nature, or even to distinctions founded on wisdom and virtue? Did his mother, under pretence of a miraculous conception and birth, claim the best house in Bethlehem as the property of heaven's favourite, or endeavour to dispossess a wealthier or more powerful guest of his lodging at the inn, to make way for David's son? Is Herod attacked with violence on the throne of Judea, or Cesar on that of the world? Quite the reverse—the murderer of a thousand innocents is permitted to live, and to reign—the tribute of a lordly conqueror is cheerfully rendered him. Under what pretence then do the saints claim the dominion of the world? How

could the disciples of Jesus ever think of turning the world upside down, to procure for themselves a place and a name? How severely did our Divine Master check every ebullition of such a spirit in his greatest favourites! This is not the state of retribution, but of discipline. The object of the gospel is to level, not men's fortune and rank, but their spirit and temper—to teach the rich in this world "to do good, and to communi-"cate, to be rich in faith and good works"—and the poor "to be rich in faith," meekness, and contentment—to instruct the mighty to be merciful, and the weak to be modest and diffident—to form the happy to moderation, and gratitude, and compassion—and the wretched to patience, and submission, and obedience—and, in a word, to bring all men, whatever be their external situation, to the common standard of humility, and to a sense of their dependance upon God, and accountableness to him, and to the habitual observance of the law of kindness, and forbearance, and forgiveness, and love, one toward another. In this alone consists, if it exist at all, the equality of human nature—and this, as far as it is attained, makes earth resemble heaven, and men resemble angels—among whom there is dignity without pride, and subordination without mur-

muring or envy—with whom difference of degree is a source not of jealousy and strife, but of love and joy.

3dly. Let us bless God, that he has made the real happiness of mankind so independant of those things, which in the present system of administration can possibly fall to the lot of but a few. How thankful ought the great bulk of men to be, that noble birth, a great estate, posts of honour, an extensive reputation, and the like, are not the essential and indispensable ingredients in the cup of human bliss—these are bestowed only upon one and another, and are far, very far, from carrying happiness with them to all those, who are thus indulged—while health, and reason, and friendship, and sufficiency, are the general gifts of a father's bounty and affection to all his children. Who would exchange a firm and vigorous constitution for the inglorious and insipid pleasure of lolling in a coach and six? What father would not wish to see his son a wise and a good man, though in obscurity and indigence, rather than inhabiting a palace with an ill conscience, or a sickly habit? Who would sell a friend, to purchase a world? dear christians, happiness is not so much out of your reach as

you are disposed to imagine. The best things are the most common—the best of all, and that which gives a relish to every other blessing, is free as the water in the stream, as the air you breathe. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye "to the waters, and he that hath no money: "come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine "and milk, without money, and without price." What really and effectually contributes to the felicity, both of the life which now is, and that which is to come, are the things which God dispenses with the greatest liberality, and in the greatest abundance. But man, mistaken, erring man, spends his money "for that which is not "bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth "not;" deluded by appearances, he loses sight of the reality—grasping at a shadow, he drops the substance into the stream, which must for ever hide it. When I behold "the great author and "finisher of my faith;" the great pattern of my imitation, poor and despised, neglected and reproached—surely I may conclude that pomp and state, affluence and applause, superiority and power, are not necessary to a good conscience, nor a composed mind, nor a cheerful countenance. Let me seek felicity in retirement, and I shall certainly find it. Let me check

imagination, and govern appetite, and look beyond the present hour, and happiness will come unsought, unsolicited, unconstrained.—But,

4thly. Is this subject calculated only to check and depress, to humble and to mortify?—Surely not. What tends so directly to elevate and support, as the grand and magnificent views which have been exhibited of the Son of God, even when he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh? The glory which burst forth upon the silent nativity of the babe of Bethlehem inspires only lofty and magnificent ideas—it introduces to all that is great and venerable in heaven and in earth. Christian, to whom belongest thou? to him whose advent, God foretold at the distance of four thousand years, by the tongues of a thousand prophets—whose conception and birth Gabriel descended from before the presence of God to announce—whose natal hour was celebrated by ten thousand celestial voices—how mean is it to add after this, for whose appearance, heroes paved the way by their triumphs, sages by their learning, politicians by their counsels, empires by their revolutions. Christian, "arise, shine, for thy "light is come, and the glory of the Lord is "risen upon thee." Thy home is a cottage—but the vast expanse of heaven is a space too

narrow for thy soul to expatiate in. The proud man hardly deigns to rank thee with the dogs of his flock—but angels are not above thy fellowship. I see thy bread and thy water portioned out to thee by weight and measure—but thou hast "food to eat which the world knows not "of." Lover and friend thou hast none—they have deserted thee at thy utmost need—but flaming ministers in bands surround thy path and thy bed, watch thy going out and coming in. Thou crawlest on a dunghill—but thy feet tread above the stars. Thy frail perishing body lies racked with pain on a pallet of straw—but thy spirit reposes in the arms of God. The sentence of a righteous judge condemns thee to dissolution —"dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt re-"turn,"—the proclamation of a triumphant Redeemer discovers to thee, life and immortality. "I am the resurrection and the life, he that "believeth in me, though he were dead, yet "shall he live." The iron tongue of death summons thee to the grave—the voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall in the morning burst asunder its bars, and set the "prisoner "of hope" for ever at liberty. O what enlarged, what august, what animating prospects, does the gospel of Jesus disclose to our wondering eyes! let us indulge in them, and look down upon the

world, and forget poverty, and remember our misery no more—let us look to the Saviour in the cradle, and look down with a holy contempt on sublunary things—let us look to the Saviour in his glory, and rise to a participation of it.

Lastly. Does the world treat us as it did our Divine Master? Can we find no room in the inn? let us make the greater dispatch, and get home. In your "father's house are many mansions," and your Saviour is gone "to prepare a place for "you, that where he is, ye may be also." "Now "is your salvation nearer than when ye believed." "He that testifieth these things saith, surely I "come quickly." "In the world you shall have tri- "bulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome "the world. It is indeed appointed unto men to "die;" but "live to the Lord, and you shall die in "him:" and "if ye believe in him who raised up "Christ from the dead, he that raised up Christ "from the dead shall also quicken your mortal "bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you."

SERMON VII.

PHILIP. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equa. with God:
But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON THE HUMILIATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

AS the character of the great author of the christian religion is in itself the most amiable and engaging which the world ever contemplated, so it presents to his disciples the brightest example of attainable excellence, together with the most powerful argument to study, to cultivate, and to express the like amiable dispositions, the same upright, generous, disinterested conduct. Were the followers of Jesus, as their duty, their reputation, and their interest at once lead them, habitually careful to observe, and anxious to resemble their Divine Master,

the name of christian, would never become a term of contempt, or of reproach. There is one point of resemblance, which the Gospel uniformly exhibits, as peculiarly important and interesting. It is, indeed, the capital feature, which determines the family likeness, or rather that general cast of the features, which molds and impresses the whole physionomy, and the absence of which is an invariable and infallible proof of an alien from the family of heaven: the point I mean is humility. When the Saviour calls us to the imitation of himself, and to seek satisfying rest to our own souls, this is the point of view in which he chooses to stand; this the lesson he inculcates: "Learn of me, for I am "meek and lowly in heart." When the Apostles would transfuse the spirit of the Gospel into the hearts of men, here they fix, on this they insist; humility is still the theme. To adduce instances of this, would be to read a considerable part of these sacred epistles. They press this temper so earnestly, and so repeatedly, as persuaded that to make a man humble, is to make him all that is good and lovely; the famous orator of Athens, being asked what was the first qualification in his own profession? answered, "action;" what the second? "action;" and what the third? "action." If it be asked, in like manner, what is the first qualification of a christian? I think

the answer must be, "humility;" what the second? "humility;" and what the third? "humility;"—for humility is not so much a separate and distinct quality of peculiar excellence in the christian character, as the pervading spirit which encompasses the whole, insinuates itself into every part, and communicates universal sweetness and grace. We have heard of the angels of light, and of the spirits of just men made perfect—they are clothed with humility. "And I beheld, and heard the voice of many "angels round about the throne, and the beasts, "and the elders: and the number of them was ten "thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of "thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is "the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and "riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, "and glory, and blessing. And every creature "which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under "the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that "are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and ho-"nour, and glory, and power, be unto him that "sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb "for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, "Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell "down and worshipped him that liveth for "ever and ever*." Let us go, then, to saints in glory, and learn to be humble; let us con-

* Rev. v. 11—14.

verse with angels, and learn to be humble; but let us at present, rather go for this all-important lesson, to him who is at once higher than the highest, and by a voluntary abasement of himself, lower than the lowest; let us look to Jesus, "who made himself of no reputation, and "took upon him the form of a servant." Nothing can be more eloquent and pathetic, than the whole of Paul's address to the Philippians on this subject; his very heart and soul are in it. "If "there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, "any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the "Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my "joy, that ye be like minded, having the same "love, being of one accord, of one mind." And that love may rest on a solid basis, that union may be secured against interruption, against discord, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain "glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem "other better than themselves." And if you need either a pattern or an argument—look to your humble, condescending Redeemer, and "let "this mind be in you which was also in him."

Though this be a habit which the christian should wear every day, and all day long, or, rather, which he ought never to put off, yet it seems peculiarly decent and suitable, for the

Lord's day, and the Lord's table; it is, if I may so express myself, the collar of the day, the badge of the order; to appear at court without it, were to be shamefully negligent, or criminally disrespectful. Behold our all-gracious Sovereign himself, the fountain of honour, the head of the order, arrayed in it; to him let us look, and learn how to put it on, and how to wear it. And for this purpose consider, in the

First place, how infinitely he is above you—he is in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Words which, if their meaning be not wilfully wrested and perverted, are strikingly expressive of majesty and dignity, which leave all created glory at an infinite distance behind. Words expressive of a divine, a supreme existence. In the system of providence, we find persons of the same species placed in a great variety of orders and stations: but betwixt the widest extremes, there is a self-evident connection and relation: there are numberless respects in which we can state a fair comparison betwixt the greatest Sovereign, and the meannest of his subjects, and that, much in favour of the latter; but what, O reptile of earth, is there in common with thee and the mighty God, "for whom are all things, and by whom are

" all things ?" It is humbling to think how many creatures, of like passions with ourselves, are greatly our superiors in respect of understanding, of knowledge, of personal accomplishments, of rank, of fortune—how humbling, then, to think of the infinite superiority of " the High and " lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity, who dwelleth " in light inaccessible and full of glory, in whose " sight the heavens are not clear, and who charg- " eth his angels with folly." In the system of nature, there are numberless beings placed highly above man, in his best estate. In the scale of creation, we find man made lower than the angels, and by his apostasy, this natural distance is wofully increased—how far beneath the pure spirits who never left their first estate, the guilty, impure, miserable children of men, who through sin, are become " like the beasts that perish"—to stand in the presence of an angel, to compare his wisdom, and might, and purity, and majesty, with our own blindness, weakness, meanness, and impurity, is humiliating indeed; but a comparison may be stated, and some lines of resemblance discovered, even between angels and men—they are both created and dependent beings; but to stand in the presence of God, to contemplate infinite perfection, prevents all comparison, confounds every idea of resemblance,

lays the axe to the very root of pride, and levels it with the dust. There, O my soul, I behold, not mighty power, but Omnipotence itself: here, infirmity upon infirmity; there, not superior intelligence, but all the treasures of wisdom—here, midnight darkness, darkness that may be felt; there, holiness without a stain—here, a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and thus surpassed, thus overwhelmed, can I but be humble? But to make our humiliation complete, something more is necessary than a bare contemplation of him who was from everlasting "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery "to be equal with God." And was it, indeed, necessary, all-glorious and divine Redeemer! was it necessary, in order that I might be made humble, that thou shouldst teach me that lesson by thine own example? Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth—adore, ye angels in rapture, and ye children of men in gratitude and love! "He who was in the form of God, and thought it "not robbery to be equal with God, made him-"self of no reputation, and took upon him the "form of a servant."—Which is the

Second point of view in which we are to consider the subject. And here let me observe to you in the

First place, that this humility of Christ, was entirely spontaneous and voluntary—his lowly state was not violently obtruded upon him, that were impossible: "He made himself of no repu-" tation, and took upon him the form of a ser-" vant." Men are tenacious of their dignities and other points of superiority over each other —they take complacency in these advantages, and, of consequence, give them up with reluctance—but Jesus, that he might be a perfect pattern of humility, and fully expose the emptiness of all the glory of man, made a cheerful, an unconstrained surrender of supreme dignity, of divine honours. He emptied himself, so the word signifies—he stept from his throne in the heavens, deposited the royal majesty and splendor, and in their stead took up meanness, poverty, and reproach. It is this which renders his humility meritorious. It was his will, his choice, his delight to be humbled. Salvation was the object he had in view; the salvation of his guilty, miserable, unworthy creature, man—and the price of it, even his own humiliation, he joyfully paid.—In the

Second place, let it be observed, that he assumed the spirit, as well as the condition, of hu-

mility—" meek and lowly in heart," was his description. In viewing human nature, as it displays itself in ordinary men, we find that a lowly estate is often connected with a lofty mind; many men, as they sink in their circumstances, rise in their sentiments; as, on the contrary, elevation of situation produces, in some well turned minds, modesty and meekness. In the character of the lowly Jesus, we meet with a perfect consistency—betwixt the state he assumed, and the sentiments he expressed, an entire and an unvarying suitableness—a consistency and a suitableness which prevent all suspicion of affectation. To be poor and despised, to want food, and a place where to lay his head, was astonishing condescension; but to be in all these distressful circumstances, without a repining thought or word, with full acquiescence in these humiliating appointments of his heavenly Father, argues a spirit thoroughly conformed to his state. A recluse in his cell may reason beautifully and justly in behalf of patience and meekness, and forgiveness of injuries, and against their opposites—but when a man enters into the commerce of the world, and actually meets with hatred, and reproach, and persecution, it is found to be no such easy matter to restrain the emotions of anger, and

impatience, and resentment; and to reduce into practice the sober dictates of unfeeling solitude. The blessed Jesus, alone, has exhibited to the world, both the theory and the practice of this amiable temper: "I say unto you, bless them that "curse you, and pray for them which despitefully "use you, and persecute you."—"When he was "reviled, he reviled not again."—"He gave his "back to the smiters, and his cheek to them that "plucked off the hair." Behold that brutal officer of the high priest, taking the advantage of his defenceless situation, as a prisoner at the bar, to strike him with the palm of the hand! And shall not fire come down from heaven to punish his cruelty and insolence? O, what an opposite spirit dictated the reply to this brutality: "If I have spoken "evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why "smitest thou me?" Hear the furious rabble insulting his dying agonies, with, "He saved "others, himself he cannot save; if he be Christ, "the Son of God, let him come down from the "cross, and we will believe;" and shall not twelve legions of angels descend to rescue him, and confound them? Be hushed and composed, O my soul; behold a wonder greater than the appearance of the whole heavenly host; hear the meek and patient Jesus repaying their insult with this ever-memorable prayer for them,

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what "they do." These, and many other instances, which might be adduced, clearly prove, that when Christ took on him the form of a servant, he assumed, at the same time, the humbleness of mind which suited that humble condition. And the amiableness and excellence of it is such, that men have seen it convenient to put on the semblance of it, where the temper was neither understood nor felt. And the world has been insulted with solemn periodical humility farces, of proud triple-crowned priests, and sceptred monarchs, doing alms to men of low degree, and washing their feet, and such like, under pretence of resembling Jesus Christ—and the next moment belying that pretension, and blotting out every idea of resemblance, by returning to all the magnificence and pride of high life. To descend is nothing, unless meekness and poorness in spirit accompany the descent;—to be placed by providence in a low condition is nothing, unless we cultivate, in that condition, the dispositions which suit it, contentment, and patience, and resignation to the will of God;—to experience a humiliating reverse of circumstances is nothing, unless our minds change with our fortunes.—Observe in the

Third place, that the humility of Jesus Christ was thorough and universal; appeared not in one, and another, or many, or most instances, but on every occasion, and in every instance. It consisted in laying aside not a great, nor the greatest, part of his original dignity and splendor, but in a surrender of the whole. It was an assumption not of some of the infirmities and miseries of human life, but a patient submission to all that is depressing and distressful to nature—a humble birth, a life of vexation, of fatigue, of pain, and of reproach; an untimely, cruel, shameful, and accursed death. "Being found in "fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and be-"came obedient unto death, even the death of "the cross." The world has been filled with the noise of a great emperor's resignation of his crown to his son in his own life-time; and this has been considered as an instance of wonderful moderation—but if we attend to the circumstances of the case, the wonder ceases. He parted with that which was become a load to him—a load which a perturbed, care-eaten mind, and an infirm, excruciated body, could no longer sustain—he parted with that which the course of a few years more must forcibly have wrested from him. What he gave away, was given to his own son, who, in the course of nature, must

soon have come to the possession of it, whether the father would or not. While he gave away much, he reserved a great deal, much more than the bulk of mankind possess at the best; and what in the eye of sober reason was worth more than his empire, a noble, if not a princely, competency.—What is there in all this, once to be named, with the resignation, humility, and moderation of the scene under our consideration? We dishonour thee, O meek and patient Lamb of God, by bringing thy astonishing grace and condescension into view at the same time with the most striking instances of what is amiable and praise-worthy among men—for though thou art to be followed and imitated, thou art never, never to be equalled. It had been the wonder of angels, if the Almighty Deliverer had vouchsafed to assume one of their shining forms when he appeared for the salvation of his miserable creatures; but to be "made in "the likeness of men," that "God should be made "manifest in the flesh, is a mystery of godliness, "which angels desire to look into;" but which, with all their superior capacity, they cannot comprehend; for it is a "height and depth, a "length and breadth, which passeth knowledge" —that when he took our nature upon him, it should be, not in the form of a potentate, but

of a servant; nay, that he should submit to be apprehended, tried, condemned, and to suffer as the vilest of malefactors, is such a series of wonders, such an accumulation of mystery, as leave us nothing but silence, astonishment, and veneration. Incomprehensible, Almighty Love! this is thy work—Jesus would be thus humbled, because his father's glory, and the souls of men ready to perish, were precious in his sight—and "God forbid that "we should glory in any thing save in his cross." Let me only add, that in the very article of dying, Christ's humility was active and unconstrained, not passive and involuntary—it was in him literally the act of dying—he laid down his life of himself; and this is plainly the deepest and most striking instance of humiliation—all that a man has will he give to save his life; to part with that, is, indeed, to part with one's all; that Jesus, therefore, might make the emptying of himself complete, he crowned the work of humiliation, by pouring out his soul unto death—long before the scene of blood could have closed it in a natural way. Thus we see how the example of Jesus, and the argument arising out of it, are in all respects calculated to form in us "the same "mind which also was in him." But, with what

additional weight does the argument fall upon us, when it is considered, that the humiliation of Christ unto shame, and suffering, and death, was not the consequence of guilt, for he was "holy, "harmless, undefiled, and separated from sin- "ners;" whereas all our depression and misery are evidently resolvable into sin, which, both from its own nature, and the appointment of God, is a certain source of woe. Be our punishment what it may, it is less than our iniquities deserve—this is the strain of the apostle Peter's reasoning on this subject *. "For this is thankworthy, if a "man for conscience toward God endure grief, "suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, "when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall "take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and "suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is ac- "ceptable with God. For even hereunto were "ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow "his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile "found in his mouth: who, when he was re- "viled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he "threatened not; but committed himself to him "that judgeth righteously. Who his own self "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that

* 1 Pet ii. 19—24.

"we, being dead to sins, should live unto "righteousness: by whose stripes ye were heal- "ed."—From what has been said, then, we learn in the

First place, how odious pride is in the sight of God—he has stamped many marks of his abhorrence upon it; Pharaoh, king of Egypt—Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Lucifer, the son of the morning, are distinguished instances of the madness and danger of pride. The language of the first was, "Who is the Lord, that I should "obey his voice, and let Israel go? I know "not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go!"—But, by a strong hand, and an out-stretched arm, and with great judgment, was he brought low; and he was made to know in the tokens of his vengeance, that God, whose message of kindness he was too proud to regard. How mighty, in his own eyes, the great king of Assyria, when walking in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, he gave vent to the pride of his heart in the swelling words of vanity: "Is not this great "Babylon that I have built for the house of the "kingdom, by the might of my power, and for "the honour of my majesty?" But behold him, the same hour, deprived of that reason which he

had employed so ill; behold him "driven from "among men, eating grass as the oxen—his body "wet with the dew of heaven," and made a spectacle of abhorrence, till he is at length made to know, that "the Most High alone ruleth in the "kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever "he will;" and a very different language taught him: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and ex-"tol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose "works are truth, and his ways judgment; and "those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Lucifer, and every son of Lucifer, says in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven—I will exalt "my throne above the stars of God—I will "ascend above the heights of the clouds—I will "be like the Most High!" But what saith God, in reply to language so lofty and overweening? "Thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the "sides of the pit! I will sweep it with the besom "of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."—But even such expressions of the hatred of God against pride, plain and alarming as they are, go not near so far in condemning and exposing that hateful quality, as the station which the Son of God assumed, and the temper he expressed, while he tabernacled among men. Did "a voice "from the excellent glory," at his entrance upon

his public work of humiliation, declare him the beloved Son of the Most High, in whom he is well pleased; and can the Most High, think you, feel any complacency for that man, who not only wants the image of his beloved Son, but is also clothed with that of his declared enemy? Thou hast need, O man, whoever thou art, who deliberately indulgest a spirit of pride, to take good heed to thyself; for if the shafts of the Almighty fall thicker and heavier in one place than another, the palace of pride is the place devoted to destruction: whereas "saith the high "and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose "name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy "place, with him also that is of a contrite and "humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the hum-"ble, and to revive the heart of the contrite "ones*."

In the second place, we may infer, how shameful and absurd, pride is in a professed christian—it is an inversion of all order, it is a downright belying of his profession; there is not a single word in the whole Bible, not a sentiment expressed, not an action performed by the great author and finisher of the christian faith, but says in the distinctest accents, far be pride from

* Is. lvii. 15.

my disciple. If we have any object of ambition whatever, if it be at all lawful to aspire, it must be to resemble our great Master; and such an ambition will uniformly lay us low. As we would not therefore contradict ourselves, as we would not expose ourselves to the just censure of inconsistency, as we would not wish to be held up as objects of derision to an assembled universe in the great day of judgment—let us nail our pride and all its attendants to the cross of Christ.

3dly. Let it be observed, that it is not lowness of condition, but lowness of heart, which constitutes humility—if our poverty of this world's goods be all the resemblance we bear to Christ, the relation, alas! is but small. In the poor and mean, humility is a patient submission to the allotment of providence, a thankful acceptance of their little, as much more than they deserve—a quiet and temperate diligence in their station and vocation—a meek and unresentful demeanour under the insults and injuries of the proud and mighty, and a vigilant jealousy over a spirit of envy, to check it in its first emotions. On the other hand, humility in the rich and great is an habitual acknowledgment, that what they have is from God; that it is theirs only in trust;

that there is no small difficulty in the faithful exercise of their trust. It is to condescend to men of low degree, as children of the same family, though but younger brothers as to rank, title, and estate, and by a cheerful communication of the advantages which providence has thrown in their way, to render the inequality less—it is to bear patiently with the petulance and unreasonableness which poverty and ignorance will sometimes discover, and even prudently to give way to them on some occasions, rather than oppose vehemence to vehemence—it is to be deeply impressed with these simple, but affecting and humbling truths, that in a state of nature, all men are equally guilty and helpless, that the grave will, ere long, abolish every mark of difference, and that in the world to which we are going, distinctions take place widely dissimilar from those which prevail here.

A variety of other considerations readily occur, tending to inculcate and promote the spirit and the practice of humility; but the season now calls us to a service, which, if we rightly understand it, will supply the place of a thousand arguments.—May God fulfil in us, this day, his gracious promise: "I will pour upon the house of "David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

" the spirit of grace, and of supplications: and " they shall look upon me whom they have " pierced *." And now may he bless what hath been spoken, for Christ's sake. Amen.

* Zech. xii. 10.

SERMON VIII.

MATT. xvii. 4.

Lord, it is good for us to be here.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON PETER'S ADDRESS TO JESUS AT THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

YOUR feet, O christians, stand fast this day, not upon the mount of transfiguration, but upon Calvary, the mount of crucifixion: your eyes this day behold the face of Jesus, not shining as the sun, but "so marred, more than any man;" his body not arrayed in garments white as the light, but exposed without a covering, a spectacle of shame and misery; attended not with Moses and Elias, but numbered with transgressors, the companion of two thieves: and instead of a voice from the heavenly glory, proclaiming aloud, "This is my beloved Son, in whom "I am well pleased;" your ears hear this doleful complaint from his own distressed soul, "My "God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And

yet, under so sad a reverse, I trust you hesitate not, intended communicant, to join Peter in his ecstatic exclamation, "Jesus, Lord, it is good for "me to be here;" and Paul in his triumph, "God forbid that I should glory, save in thy "cross."

And is the sight of a wounded, bleeding, dying, innocent man, so pleasant a sight then? Yes! O my much indebted soul, for this glorious God-man, was "wounded for thy transgressions, "and bruised for thy iniquities. The chastise-"ment of thy peace was upon him, and by his "stripes thou art healed."

To them that believe, Christ is most precious in whatever form he appears, in those eyes whom his own sight-giving eye-salve has anointed. He is then most amiable, when to the natural man, whom the God of this world has blinded, his aspect is most ungainly and forbidding. A Saviour humbled and "made of no reputation;" a Saviour with the book and the rod in his hand; a Saviour bearing a cross, and borne upon it, is the very Saviour whom the believer needs, and loves, and seeks after, and rejoices in: and this, my brethren, is that Saviour whom you are in a little while to confess before God, and angels, and men,

as the object of your warmest love, and the sole foundation of all your hopes. That, by the grace of God, I may somewhat assist you in this solemn work, suffer me, from the words read, and applied to the occasion of our present meeting, to point out to you some of those views of Christ in this ordinance, which naturally suggest this language, "Lord it is good for us to be here." And in the

First place, how good is it to be here, where the eye of faith discerns an awfully just God, arrayed in the robes of mercy, presenting us with the free and full pardon of all our sins. Here in the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of God, we behold an all-sufficient propitiation and atonement: justice exacting the uttermost farthing of our enormous debt, and that debt to the uttermost farthing discharged. You know, O believer, how precious a sight this is, for you know how insupportable a load sin is; you have felt in your awakened conscience the dreadful answer to that soul-alarming question, What doth every sin deserve? God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come: you have trembled under the frown of an angry God. You once stood shuddering on the brink of

that unquenchable Tophet, which the breath of the Lord kindles and keeps alive; and you have seen that thick-gathered tempest bursting upon the head of him who is the equal and fellow of the Almighty, and there spending all its fury; and now the storm is over, you sit basking in the sun-shine of divine love. Has the miserable bankrupt reason to say it is good for me to be here, when, by the mercy of his compassionate creditor, he is set at large, and restored to his family and home? Does the chain-galled captive exult when the day of release dawns upon him? does he say of the air of liberty, O how sweet, and how good it is? is the presence of his prince truly welcome to the trembling, condemned criminal, when he comes in person to the dungeon with a pardon in his hand? What then, O pardoned sinner, "prisoner of hope," must thy joy be, admitted as thou art, not only within the court, but to the royal presence, translated from the condemned hold, to thy prince's table? Behold, here, Jesus given to be the covenant of his people, "to open the blind eyes, to bring out "the prisoners from the prison, and them that "sit in darkness out of the prison house:" approach then, and lay hold on God's own covenant, and on the pardon it conveys, saying,

"Lord, it is good for me to be here," for here my sin-harassed conscience finds ease, here my trembling, doubting, distressed soul finds rest.

2dly. It is good to be with the Saviour in this ordinance, for here we behold, here we enjoy an all-sufficient fulness, as of "mercy to pardon," so "of grace to help in every time of need." What were the pardon of sin itself, great and invaluable as it is, were we left barely with that, were we left to be our own providers? What would it avail the enlarged debtor or pardoned criminal, that his irons were knocked off, and his prison doors set open, if he must be cast upon the wide world, friendless, helpless, without hope? This may and does happen in the course of human things, for men do not always support them whose debts they remit, neither do the princes of this world usually advance the wretches whose crimes they pardon—but our heavenly sovereign dispenses not his grace by weight and measure, performs not his works in parcels—"whom he "justifies, them he also glorifies," and in the mean time prepares for glory; their "bread is given "them, their water is made sure." Here, my brethren, is "milk for babes, and strong meat "for them that are of full age;" a reviving cordial for him that is ready to perish, and choice

wine to those that be of heavy hearts; medicine for the diseased, and a healing balm for the wounded in spirit; the bread of life for the hungry soul, the water of life for the faint—Here, a table covered with the choicest dainties; not as the tables of the great sometimes are, for show not for use, to amuse the eye rather than satisfy the taste, calculated sometimes to excite an appetite which they are forbidden to gratify, but a father's table, covered with children's bread, provided on purpose, and recommended by the cheerfullest and most affectionate welcome. Was the sight pleasant to the happy highly honoured guests of our blessed Lord, when in the days of his flesh he fed thousands at once, to see their Saviour in person blessing their provision, and that provision, in virtue of his blessing, miraculously multiply in the distributors hands? How much better, O christians, is it for us to be here, where we behold the Lord Jesus at once the entertainer and the food, where we are fed "not with the meat that perisheth, but with that "which endureth to everlasting life," and where our repast is but one remove from the fulness of joy? Is it not good to be where there is "grace "to help in every time of need?" God knows, distressed creature, and thy own afflicted soul knows, that thy occasions are many and claim-

ant—"without are fightings, within are fears." A treacherous heart, an ensnaring world, dangerous when it frowns, more dangerous in its smiles—a cunning, powerful, watchful, unwearied, implacable adversary—corruption strong, grace weak—but O how strong, how abundant, how victorious the grace that is in Jesus Christ! On that cross, see the world crucified and the flesh mortified, and the serpent's head bruised: in the crimson stream that flows from it, behold strength to thy grace, death to thy lusts, victory over all thy enemies: behold there, "God delivering up his Son for us, how shall he "not then with him also freely give us all "things."

3dly. The language of the text is suggested to us, from the consideration that in this ordinance, we behold the Saviour affording us an all-perfect, immoveable, eternal security. What renders the fulness of this world an unsatisfying portion, is its being an uncertain portion; what renders the fulness of God truly valuable, truly desirable, is its being an unchangeable, inexhausted fulness. The circumstance that fills up the measure of the christian's strong consolation is its being built upon two immoveable pillars, the immutability of God's eternal coun-

sel, and the confirming sanction of his oath: and the cup of which ye are about to partake is the blood of God's everlasting covenant, the price that was paid in purchase of all the blessings contained in it, as well as the full and final ratification of it. Thy pardon, O believer in Christ Jesus, is not only granted but sealed; nay more, in virtue of thy union with Christ, thou hast acquired a just right to it; for the law has had its course, its sentence has been executed, it has been prosecuted even unto death, it can go no farther: and canst thou but be secure, when justice and mercy are of the same side, the side of the miserable offender? In this happy and much favoured land, we count it joy that our lives, and properties, and liberties, are secured to us by law, though we see that law frequently changing its form, and failing in its effect; but, glory to God, that eternal life, and "the glo-"rious liberty of the sons of God," and a right to the kingdom of heaven, are confirmed to us by a sanction infinitely more sacred, and held by a tenure infinitely more certain, than even the British legislature can give, the immutable decrees of the king of grace and glory. The laws of the Medes and Persians may not be altered, but they can be eluded. The writing that is written in the name, and sealed with the seal

of an Ahasuerus, no man may reverse, but its effect may be prevented by a counter-mandate issued under the same authority; but the laws of heaven, as they are irreversible, so they are irresistible; the writing and seal of "Him by whom "kings reign," as it carries along with it uncontroulable authority, so it is always consistent with itself. The "earth may be removed, and "the mountains carried into the midst of the "sea, the waters thereof may roar and be "troubled, and the mountains shake with the "swelling thereof; but the counsel of the Lord "standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart "to all generations." What kind of security, O trembling, doubting soul, dost thou, canst thou desire? Has not God spoken? Hath he not promised? Hath he not sworn? Would you have more? Is he not wise, and good, and powerful? Is he not both able and willing to perform his word, and promise, and oath? Are you still unsatisfied? give your fears and suspicions to the winds. Has not Christ died? Behold an end of every alarm, an answer to every question, a solution of every difficulty, a removal of every obstruction. Christ died. Does the tempter harass with mistrust and despondency? does faith stagger? do trials afflict? doth prevailing corruption discourage?—behold, the powerful

charm that dissolves every enchantment, that rebukes the tempter, establishes the faith, sweetens the trial, kills the destroyer. Christ died, Christ rose again, Christ is at the right hand of God, Christ is in his church, in his ordinances, in his word; Christ is to come again: "he has all power "in heaven and in earth committed to him; he "gives grace, he will give glory." Say then, O christian, is it not good to be here? In the

Fourth place, we have good reason to adopt this language, when we consider what a blessed communion and fellowship we are here called to enjoy. "Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, "and with his Son Jesus Christ." We read now and then in the history of earthly courts, that upon such an occasion and at such a time, this and the other great minister of state had the honour of a conference with his sovereign: lend me your hand, O christian, or rather, let me put your hand into your Saviour's, who will introduce you into a presence before which kings shrink into nothing—the dread but delightful presence of his and your heavenly Father, with, "Behold here am I, and this son, and "that daughter whom thou hast given me. "Father, I introduce to thee this miracle of thy "sovereign grace, who but a little ago slept sound

" on the brink of hell, and whom the call of thy
" gospel roused, and alarmed to fly from the wrath
" to come—this lately specious hypocrite, who
" had nothing but a form of godliness, but whom
" by thy spirit thou hast now taught something of
" the power of it—this poor, wounded, bleeding
" mourner, who has for days, for years past, walk-
" ed in darkness, and seen no light, and who still
" pants for God, the living God—this once gay,
" giddy, flaunting creature, whom thou hast cru-
" cified to the world and made to taste of the
" powers of the world to come — this young,
" tender, beloved lamb of the flock, whom by thy
" preventing grace thou hast secured from the
" snares of a sinful and adulterous generation, and
" taught to remember the one thing needful in the
" days of youth—this venerable servant, grown
" grey in thy work, whom thou hast often ad-
" mitted to thy presence, and whom, ere long, I
" shall present to thee in the beauty of holiness
" and the fulness of joy—this stranger who is come
" from afar to join himself to the Lord his God—
" this son of Abraham whom Satan had bound,
" but whom I now and for ever set free. And,
" Father, I will, that all these my sons and daugh-
" ters, whatever their names, whatever their out-
" ward circumstances, whatever their particular
" weaknesses, may be one, as thou art in me and

"I in thee; that they also may be one in us." Communion with God! O my soul can it be? What, to be in the secret of the Almighty, to see him eye to eye, to hear the Most High speak in my ear, as a man to his friend, and every word, a word of mercy and love: and to be permitted, to be encouraged to pour out my whole heart, into his fatherly bosom, to tell him what a poor and needy, what an unworthy and helpless creature I am; but withal, how dearly I love him, and how earnestly I pant after him. Communion with God! let me run, let me fly into his arms, let me take shelter under his wings, let him hide me in his pavilion, let me sit down, let me remain, let me abide for ever at his table: O my father, my God, my eternal all, "it is "good for me to be here."

The communion of saints too, heightens the joy of this repast. Is it not good and pleasant, christians, dearly beloved, to have fellowship one with another? What a sacred and endearing bond of union is the cross of Christ—what a motive to union and peace, that we have "one "hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one "baptism, one God and Father." Let me haste then, O my soul, to join myself to this goodly society of saints on earth, whom one day I hope

to join, glorified saints in heaven: they shall be ever dear to me, for they are so to my dearest Lord and Master: "it is good for me to be "here," for here over the symbols of my Saviour's broken body and shed blood, I for ever lay down "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, "and clamour, and evil speaking, with all ma- "lice," if ever such unworthy guests could find a place in my breast; and here, as an elect child of God, I from henceforth "put on bowels "of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, "meekness, long suffering, forbearance, for- "giveness, and charity, which is the bond of per- "fectness." It is surely "good for me to be here," where communion with God, and with heirs of glory, gives me a taste of heaven, and makes me more meet to go thither.

5thly. It is good for us to be here, for here we are found in the way of our duty. The privileges and benefits of the gospel, and the duties of the gospel, go hand in hand—and a real lover of Jesus Christ will have as much delight in performing the one, as in enjoying the other, will rejoice as much in the work as in the reward. I say a real lover of Jesus Christ, in opposition to those who are for obtaining the prize without being at the trouble of running the race;

who are for leaping into victory, but cannot endure to think of conflict; who are much in love with the Redeemer's wages, but very little so with his labour. Is it any wonder that such are frequently complaining of languid, comfortless, dead frames? they seek after nothing else but frames, and therefore they miss them too—it is impossible that a sluggish, inactive creature, should be a lively, cheerful, happy christian. Let me then, O my Saviour, seek the consolations of thy Spirit in thy way—let me ever be found in the plain road of duty, let me have comfort in it, if so thy will be; but at any rate, let me still be in the road of duty—especially when my duty, as on this occasion, is my most exalted privilege at the same time. Is it not good and highly honourable for me to declare in the most public and solemn manner I can, how sacred thy dying will is to me, how grateful and affectionate a remembrance I entertain of thy amazing love; what a deliberate, determined purpose, I have formed of living henceforward unto him, who died for me, and with what a glorious hope I am animated to the doing and enduring whatever thy good providence calls me unto? Let me approach thy holy table, as thou hast commanded; but let me not, with thy servant on the holy mount, whose words I have presumed to use,

think of erecting a tabernacle here, so long as thou hast work for me elsewhere, but let me descend into the world with a more ardent zeal for the whole of thy service, from what I here see of thy glory; let thy presence go with me, and if it be thy will, let a dungeon be my habitation, and the bread and water of affliction my fare; let the world hate and persecute me, and the king of terrors himself assault me, I will still rejoice and say—"Lord, it is good for me "to be here," for thou art here, "thou work-"est in me to will, and to do, and to suffer thy "good pleasure." "It is good for me to be "here" in the practice of this duty, for it shall, by thy grace, direct me unto and assist me in the performance of every other—I may soon be called to "cut off a right hand, or to pluck out a "right eye"—I will look back to thy cross, O blessed Jesus, and learn both cheerfulness and fortitude to undergo the painful operation. When duty is hard, and nature murmurs and rebels, I will call to remembrance thy precious words, when the bitter cup of the Father's wrath was put into thy hands—"not my will but thine be "done;" when my cross is heavy, and my strength small, I will look to him whose cross is "the power of God to salvation," whose shame is my glory, whose pain is my ease, whose death

is my life. Wherever I go, whatever I lose, whatever I feel, this shall be my comfort; I was at such a time, in such a place, on such a service, with my Lord, and he has said, "I will never "leave thee nor forsake thee, and he shall be "my God for ever and ever, he shall be my "guide even unto death." In the

Sixth and last place, let us once more assume Peter's words, as expressive of Jacob's sense on a similar occasion, "this is none other but the "house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Would you reckon it a good thing, dear immortal soul, to see one of the flaming ministers, who stand before the throne, unfold the book of life, and display to thy ravished eyes the golden page where thy name is recorded? behold a sight, infinitely more suitable to thy condition, behold "the angel of the new covenant," the Creator of the Cherubim and of the Seraphim, opening the book of the gospel, and inviting thee to write thy own name in it; behold t with his finger already engraven there, in characters more indelible than the stroke of the diamond, and tell me how readest thou? What is thy name—an elect soul, holy and beloved? Alas! I am afraid I dare not say so; holy, sure I am not, and beloved, how then can I be? A hungering

thirsting soul? Neither is this my character, for want of spiritual appetite and desire is the very source of my distress, the very cause why I "go "mourning all the day." A captive, a prisoner? both, both, but ah! too much in love with my fetters, reconciled to, enamoured of my dungeon, and therefore I fear, "no prisoner of hope." Well then, a lost, dead, perishing, helpless sinner? The chief of sinners? Yes, that is precisely my name, I know it too well, and each horrid letter in it is ready to fill me with despair. Child of God, heir of the heavenly inheritance, acknowledge the name without dismay; for such as thine is every name that is written in the Lamb's book of life. What inhabitants, think you, people the celestial regions? Those who "once were "darkness, but now are light in the Lord;" —those who were "by nature the children of "wrath even as others"—those who were "once "afar off, dead in trespasses and sins," enemies, enmity itself, against God. And here, O my brethren, you behold the blessed source of their and your light, and love, and glory, and joy: "the "blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin," which renders God propitious, procures an all-sufficient fulness, establishes an unshaken security, introduces into the most exalted and delightful fellowship and society, gives strength for,

and joy in the performance of every duty, opens the gates of the celestial city, kills death, bruises Satan's head, extinguishes the flames of hell. Here then, O my soul, I will take my station, as in the portal of heaven: unworthy indeed I am of so much as the sight of that blessed place, but "worthy is the Lamb that "was slain;"—weary and heavy laden I am, the more is my need of rest; a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth, but here is my home, my everlasting habitation. The very chief of sinners, therefore, the thankfullest, joyfullest, most loving of saints—"Lord, it is good for me to be here," for here I see a full end of "sorrow, and crying, "and pain." Is it not good to be where there is no more night, no more death, where "God "wipes away the tears from every eye." Is it not good to "be for ever with the Lord! in "whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose "right hand there are rivers of pleasure for ever-"more."

In these views, my dear brethren, and with such affections, I could wish you now to approach your blessed Lord and Master—filled with a sense of his gracious presence, assured of his love, relying on his merit, rejoicing in his glory, waiting for "the end of your faith, the salvation

" of your souls." And now, " may our Lord Jesus " Christ himself, and God even our Father, who " hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting " consolation, and good hope, through grace, " comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every " good word and work," and give us all eternal cause to say, " Lord, it is good for us to be where " thou art."—Amen and amen.

practice. The same eyes of compassion and love are now upon you, the same arms of condescension stretched out toward you, the same voice of friendship distils into your ears—with this difference, that the injunction comes not now from a humbled, distressed, despised man upon earth, "but from the most excellent glory," but from the throne of God, but from him "who lives and "reigns for ever and ever, to whom all power in "heaven and in earth of right belongs."—Consider then, that as it is the request of a friend, so it is the command of God, which calls you to this solemn service—and as if your Saviour in person pronounced the words in your ears, and displayed before your eyes, the still more affecting monitor of his pierced hands and feet, reply to his call, "my Lord and my God," behold thy servant flying to thy presence, to do thy will. How can I ever forget thee? Engrave thy name, thy love, on my hands, on the living tables of my heart, that I may live to thee, and only to thee.

That I may by the divine grace, intended communicants, assist your meditations on this occasion, I shall endeavour to bring Christ the Lord to your remembrance in a few particulars, and then make a short appeal to your own hearts, upon the propriety, utility, and wisdom

of the precept—which will also lead me to speak a little of the temper of mind, which is requisite to a right compliance with it.

On the first of these heads I might represent the blessed Jesus to the eye of your faith, in his eternal, essential glory, before all worlds—as the all-creating word, which gave existence to the universe, and the all upholding word which preserves it—I might call upon you just to open your eyes and look around you, and after you have, for a moment, considered the last of the objects which encompass you on every side, ask you whether it be possible to forget him, whose wisdom, and power, and goodness, shine so conspicuously and incessantly in every creature.—But we are at this time called particularly to consider his redeeming goodness, and more particularly still, his dying love. On this, then, let our souls dwell with gratitude and delight; in this pleasant field let us with rapture expatiate, and thus begin upon earth the employment and the joys of the blessed above.

I. When Christ says then, "do this in remem-
"brance of me," he seems to say, "remember,
"O man, remember, O woman, my cheerful and
"prompt obedience to my Father's will, in the
"matter of your salvation—for the attainment of

" this end, at his appointed time, I assumed the
" body he had prepared for me; that his will and
" work might be fulfilled, I carried my cross from
" the womb upwards, I offered myself to the
" hatred, reproach, and contempt of men, to days
" of labour, and nights of watchfulness—the
" mountains and the plains, the lakes and the
" rivers, the city and the wilderness, the temple,
" the synagogue, and the private house, bear
" witness how unweariedly I taught the will of
" God to souls ready to perish through lack of
" knowledge. The blind, the dumb, the lame, the
" diseased, those who were dead can tell how rea-
" dily I embraced every opportunity of doing
" good. And when the appointed time came, when
" I must pour out my soul an offering for sin, the
" garden, the tribunal, the cross, the tomb can
" shew whether or not the law of God was within
" my heart. And when you remember me, and
" when you remember these things, O think of the
" ready compliance which ye also should yield to
" your heavenly Father's will, as you would be
" thought my disciples, as you value the approv-
" ing testimony of your own conscience, as you
" value the approbation of God, and the great in-
" terests of my kingdom. Is the path of com-
" manded duty stretched out before you? not
" only walk, but run in it, that it may appear to
" be your meat and drink to do God's will. Is the

"cup of bitterness and suffering put into your "hand, learn of me, and say, 'Father, not my will "but thine be done,' and then with submission "drink it. Did I go on with such alacrity and "speed with a cross full in my view? and with a "crown in yours can you be indolent?"

II. Farther, the command of Christ calls upon us to remember his unwearied attention to the everlasting concerns of mankind. At the early age of twelve years, he began to cure that fatal plague of the human mind, ignorance—from the moment of his first manifestation as the Messiah, he set himself with unremitting zeal and diligence to preach the doctrine of the kingdom; during the intervals of that work, the distrest and the miserable found him ever ready to relieve them; nor did he wait their application to him, but "went about doing good," and often by one and the same act of benignity conveyed a cure to the body and the soul. How deeply he entered into this grand design, the recovery of our fallen nature to goodness and happiness, let his frequent and affectionate addresses, his whole nights spent in prayer, his pathetic lamentations and tears, evince. When you think of this, communicants, learn the infinite value of your own immortal souls, learn a watchful atten-

tion to your own eternal interest, learn to postpone every thing to the care of your better part. O remember that your Saviour has not to this hour relaxed his care—he invites you now to recollect the particular providences, and the particular means of grace, which he employed, and blessed, for awakening, convincing, converting, and edifying you—he thus reminds you of his constant watchfulness over you, and thus would excite your constant regard to him. "Re-
"member, O my friend, in what a fearful condi-
"tion my grace found thee—with an unbelieving
"world, laid fast asleep, asleep on the very brink
"of ruin. I stretched out my hand and awoke
"thee, disturbed thee not in anger, but in pity—I
"sent thee that afflictive providence, not because
"I hated, but because I loved thee. When that
"alarming, or informing, or comforting sermon
"was preached, it was my voice which I caused
"thee to hear—when that scripture became quick
"and powerful to thy soul, it was my quickening
"Spirit which gave it life and power, and which
"made thee alive to hear it—when on such and
"such an occasion, in prayer, thou as a prince
"hadst power with God, and prevailed, 'my
"spirit helped thine infirmities,' my prevailing,
"'I will,' procured thee an answer of peace—when
"was my ear heavy that I should not hear, or my

"hand shortened that I should not save thee? Be-
"hold now that table, and the bread which is by
"and by to be broken, and the wine which is by
"and by to be poured out, and say if I am ever
"unmindful of thee—have I not engraven thee on
"the palms of my hands? have I not set thee as a
"seal upon my arm, upon my heart? Do this then
"in remembrance of me, who never will, never
"can forget thee; and when you consider all this,
"when you see how precious you and all your in-
"terests are to me, be more watchful, more zea-
"lous, and attentive to them yourselves."

III. Farther, in the third place, the words of institution call us to a serious and affectionate remembrance of Christ's meekness, humility, and self-denial. Consider, I beseech you, "the grace
"of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was
"rich, for your sakes became poor—who being
"in the form of God, thought it not robbery
"to be equal with God: but made himself of no
"reputation, and took upon him the form of a
"servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
"and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled
"himself, and became obedient unto death, even
"the death of the cross.*" "Consider him who
"endured such contradiction of sinners against

* Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

" himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your " minds." To enter into a detail of particulars on this head, would be to rehearse his whole history, from the manger to the tomb—for the whole is a commentary upon his own words concerning himself, " I am meek and lowly in heart." The place of his residence, Nazareth—the mean employment of his reputed Father, the obscurity and poverty of his relations, were repeatedly mentioned to him by way of insult and reproach, but drew no expression of resentment from him—his plainnest words and kindest actions were grievously misinterpreted and misrepresented, but yet he calmly proceeded to do and to teach—the multitude would one day force a crown upon him, and the next, drag him to be crucified. The former he with humility declines, the latter he with humility submits unto. The disciples, poor as they were, had notwithstanding houses to dwell in, but their master had none. " The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air " have nests, but the son of man hath not where " to lay his head." When his raiment came to be divided among the soldiers, it was found of the very plainnest, homeliest sort—nor was all this an assumed humble outside, to disguise or conceal a proud and lofty heart, as has often been the case—no, all was uniform and consistent, for

" when he was reviled, he reviled not again;
" when he suffered, he threatened not, but com-
" mitted himself to him that judgeth righteously."
When he was buffetted, and scourged, and spit upon, soft words and kind looks were all the return he made—to the disciple who denied him, he expressed, and that only by his eyes, a sentiment of pity—to the traitor himself, the harshest word, was that mild question, " Betrayest thou
" the son of man with a kiss?" The very agony of torture drew from him only a prayer in behalf of his tormentors: and even now, all great and glorious as he is, he condescends to the littleness, the weakness, and the wants of the meanest believer, and, what is infinitely more, humbles himself to " stand at the door and knock" upon the proudest, haughtiest, stubbornest sinner. Do this then, O christian, in remembrance of the meek and lowly, the self-denied and patient Jesus. And, when thus employed, suppose him once more addressing thee in such terms as these: How ill does pride become thee, O my disciple and my friend, when thy master was pleased so to debase himself; was he so poor? Blush then to think that thou wert ever ashamed of poverty, and anxious to avoid it. Did I condescend to wash my servants' feet, and dare you reckon the meanest office of charity, and meek-

ness, and self-denial beneath you? Did I assume or affect state and magnificence? And can you be vain of costly furniture, or apparel, or equipage? When you behold me ascribing all the glory to God, will you covet, and seek, and delight in the applause of men? If Christ pleased not himself, do you deserve the name of his disciples, if your only or your great study be how to please yourselves? Did the most outrageous insults and injuries excite my compassion, not my anger, and shall every trifling piece of disrespect, every little injury, every insignificant affront, blow up my servant into a flame? Did I drink off my cup of unmixed bitterness, without repining, and shall the smallest drop of gall cause thee to murmur and complain? Why, O why has the example of your Master so little influence upon you? Remember me, and be humble, and patient, and mortified, to self and to the world.

IV. Again, remember your Saviour in his intrepidity and fortitude. Though meek as the lamb, and harmless as the dove, he assumed the most unshaken firmness, when the honour of his heavenly Father required it. What an exhibition of this character have we in the temptation in the wilderness, when the old dragon was repelled and foiled in every attack! With what a

noble courage and zeal did he drive the buyers and sellers from the temple, chasing whole multitudes before him! What a display of real magnanimity shines in his deportment in his examination before the High Priest, and his arraignment and trial at Pilate's tribunal! When interrogated by the former about his disciples and doctrine—this was his animated, undaunted reply: "I spake "openly in the synagogue, and in the temple, "whither the Jews always resort; and in secret "have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? "ask them which heard me, what I have said "unto them: behold they know what I have "said*." When insulted and threatened by the latter in these haughty terms, "Knowest thou "not that I have power to crucify thee, and have "power to release thee?" with calmness, but with boldness, he reproved his insolence: "Thou "couldest have no power at all against me, "except it were given thee from above: there-"fore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the "greater sin†." Consider him then, christians, who "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good con-"fession;" who voluntarily met the king of terrors, arrayed in more than his usual horror: consider him, and learn to repel every temptation, to brave every danger, to vanquish

* John xviii. 20, 21. † John xix. 2.

every foe—to fear God, that you may have no other fear—remember him, O my soul, and be ashamed of thine own weakness and cowardice. How often hast thou feared where no fear was! How often fled when none pursued! How often fallen before a weak and contemptible enemy! How often yielded the victory without striking a single blow. Do this, then, in remembrance of him, and revive the spirit of a christian within thee, and henceforth in the hour of danger and trial, look to Jesus, the great captain of salvation, and recollect this day's solemn oath of fidelity—and stand fast in the faith; quit thyself like a man, a christian; be strong—be stedfast unto death, and thy great commander shall give thee a crown of life.

V. In the fifth and last place, remember, in an especial manner, the one great source of all these shining graces of thy Saviour, the great inspiring cause of his perfect obedience to the will of God, his uninterrupted attention to the interests of mankind, his humility and patience, his perseverance and fortitude—even his everlasting, his astonishing love—love, strong as death, love, which no waters can quench, no floods drown. Had the by-standers reason for their remark, when observing his tears at the grave of Lazarus,

they said to one another, "Behold how he loved "him!"—How much greater reason have we to draw the same conclusion when we behold him in his agony, weeping not tears, but blood in great drops; not from his eyes, but from every pore of his body—when we behold his back furrowed with stripes, his temples galled with a crown of thorns—his hands and feet thrust through with nails; and when we hear him in the immediate prospect of torments horrible to think of, referring all to pure unmixed love, "this is "my body broken for you"—"this is the new "covenant in my blood, which is shed for you." Does not a voice, O communicant, seem to issue from each of those painful wounds, saying, turn hither thy eyes, O sinner, and say whether or not I loved thee? What affecting language descends from the triumphant ignominy and pain of the crucified Jesus! What further proof, O my friend, canst thou require, or I give, of my unalterable affection for thee—have I not written it in blood, my own blood?—but yet I grudge it not, I glory in it, for my love triumphs, and thou art saved. Surely, then, I need not call upon thee twice, to do this in remembrance of me—surely thy soul is on the wing to fly into these outstretched arms, which are ready to receive thee; to join itself to that heart which still and

and ever glows with love toward thee—here deposit all thy cares, and pains, and sorrows—here thou shalt ever meet an affectionate welcome—here thou shalt ever find rest. And from hence survey, not only what my love has already done for thee, and what it now bestows, but look forward and contemplate the treasures it has in reserve for you. Thou hast no cause yet to say, I love thee, compared to what thou shalt have; for the fruits of my love are but beginning to appear—and an eternity is required to display them in their full glory. The blest period approaches, when thou shalt eat not of the first fruits, but of the full vintage, and drink not of the stream, but at the source. "In my Father's "house are many mansions; I have prepared a "place for you: I will come again and receive "you unto myself, that where I am, there ye "may be also. I give unto thee eternal life, "thou shalt never perish. I will see you again, "and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no "man taketh from you; in my presence there "is fulness of joy, at my right hand there are "pleasures for evermore. Amen, even so come "quickly, Lord Jesus."

SERMON X.

1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

FOR THE EVENING OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

YOU have this day, my dear christian friends, been employed in the most solemn act of devotion you can perform on this side the grave—you have been affixing your seal to the very important truths contained in my text, that Christ died, and that he rose again. I hope you have been duly attentive to the solemnity of this day's service—to the great objects you are called upon in this ordinance to contemplate—namely, an offended, become a reconciled God, through the meritorious sufferings of a once crucified and now enthroned Redeemer. And while

you have performed an act of obedience, I trust you have at the same time paid a tribute of gratitude and love—if this is the case, I am sure you will not think it too much, now in the close of the work, to attend for a very little while longer, while I endeavour to inforce and improve these feelings, from this interesting doctrine—a doctrine which, alas! has lost much of its influence, from a circumstance which should rather impress it more deeply—namely, its being generally well known. I propose, then, in the first place, very briefly to consider our blessed Lord in the several points of view presented to us in the text—and then lead to the improvement of the subject; humbly imploring the blessed influences of that divine Spirit, which raised up Jesus from the dead, as the proof and pledge of our resurrection, the foundation of our faith, and hope of that blessed immortality to which our views are raised in the gospel, to furnish us wholly unto every good thought, word, and work, to do his will.

I. Then Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures. It is a very useful and far from unentertaining employment to trace the connection betwixt the prophecies concerning our Lord in the Old Testament, and the exact accomplish-

ment of the minutest article, in his person and character in the gospel history; so perfectly do they correspond throughout, that they seem to be rather histories of facts already past, than predictions of events still future—in a particular manner his death and the manner of it are held forth with an uncommon measure of clearness and precision. Thus the psalmist assuming the person of our Saviour in the twenty-second psalm, the fifteenth and following verses, says, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; "and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and "thou hast brought me to the dust of death. "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of "the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced "my hands and my feet. I may tell all my "bones: they look and stare upon me. They "part my garments among them, and cast lots "upon my vesture;" here we find the chief circumstances attending his crucifixion, the piercing his hands and feet—the treatment of the multitude—the distribution of his raiment, narrated in express words, upwards of one thousand years before they happened. The evangelical prophet Isaiah likewise at the distance of seven hundred years, is no less express: "He was "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised "for our iniquities; the chastisement of our

"peace was upon him; and with his stripes we "are healed. All we like sheep have gone "astray; we have turned every one to his own "way; and the Lord hath laid on him the ini- "quity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was "afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a "sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he open- "eth not his mouth. He was taken from prison "and from judgment: and who shall declare his "generation? for he was cut off out of the land "of the living: for the transgression of my peo- "ple was he stricken. And he made his grave "with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; "because he did no violence, neither was any "deceit in his mouth*." And the prophet Daniel limits the precise time, when the Messiah, the prince was to be cut off, but not for himself. And now, christians, the object of our faith is the very same; we likewise believe in a suffering, a dying Saviour, suffering and dying for us—but we have to look back upon this event as long since past—and it is the very event we have been this day commemorating. And are these things indeed so? Has Christ indeed died for us? Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth—the God of nature, the fountain and giver of life, ignomi-

* Isa. liii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

niously terminating his own, nailed to a cross. Were we to consider our blessed Lord merely as a man, as an innocent man—were we to suppose such a person, abstracting from the dignity of his character, and the importance of his mission, appearing in our own day, in our own country, living the most exemplary life, doing good to all, doing harm to none, expressing the highest concern for the real welfare of those he was among, promoting it by every means in his power practising every act of mortification and self-denial, of humility, of condescension, of meekness—should we see such a person exposed to all the rigour and violence of popular fury, insulted, reproached, persecuted, tormented, put to death by the very men who were the objects of his love, of his good will, we would undoubtedly feel, strongly feel, the mixt emotions of pity and indignation; pity for this innocent sufferer, indignation at his cruel, ungrateful murderers—and are we less affected, O christians, when this day we behold Jesus Christ evidently set forth as crucified for us. We have been contemplating the sufferings and death, not of an ordinary person, not merely of an innocent man, or of one in whom we are little interested, but of the holy and innocent lamb of God—the bloody passion

of him who "spake as never man spake," of him who "loved us even unto the death—greater "love hath no man than this, that a man lay "down his life for his friends." He is above our compassion—having suffered these things, he is entered into his glory—but his enemies, his murderers, they, they are still with us; they are harboured, cherished by us—I do not mean the cruel, relentless Jews, who embrued their hands in his blood, who nailed him to the cross—we are, alas, much more nearly connected with them —they are those of our own house; they are our own evil passions and affections; our pride, our malice, our hard-heartedness, our covetousness, our revenge—these, these, and such like, are the murderers of the Lord of glory. By sitting down at the table of the Lord, we have expressed our sorrow for them; let us express it still more by for ever forsaking them; let us no longer retain those very sins which our Saviour died to expiate; let us never "crucify to ourselves the "Son of God afresh, and put him again to an open "shame." He is now indeed incapable of being affected with our cruelty and ingratitude—he is now incapable of suffering shame or infamy—but O, with what aggravated misery will our ingratitude light upon our own heads, if we are thus

basely guilty of it. Again, Christ not only died, but died for our sins—let us here admire both the wonderful mercy and justice of God—mercy in acquitting the guilty criminal—justice in requiring such a ransom.—And was the redemption of our souls so very precious in the sight of God?—did he value our happiness at so high a rate, and shall we reckon ourselves unworthy of eternal life?—shall Christ have died in vain?—shall we wilfully exclude ourselves from the benefits of a Redeemer's purchase?—God forbid. "We are "thy servants, O Lord, truly we are thy ser- "vants"—we yield ourselves unto thee, we accept of deliverance from the guilt and power of our sins, in the way which thou hast appointed—for the sake of what thou thyself hast done and suffered upon our account.

II. Christ was buried. Behold fresh matter for wonder—the Son of God mixed with the dust of the earth—the eternal Creator and Ruler of the world consigned to a grave. But O how important a circumstance is this to us—the grave, O christians, is the dark, the gloomy passage through which we must enter to life and immortality—and our blessed Lord and Master, by his burial, has perfumed the grave for his faithful followers. We are every one of us fast hastening

to the dust of death—by and by we must mingle with the clay—this is a prospect at which nature recoils—this is frequently ready to throw a damp over all our joys—but rejoice in this, christian—thy Saviour was dead, was buried—he did not shun the horrors of a tomb, such was his amazing love to thee—his sacred, mangled, crucified body, after all the indignities which had been put upon it, now sleeps quietly, is now for ever freed from ignominy and pain.—But, alas, are all our hopes then reduced to a bleeding corpse? Is the consolation of Israel now no more but a lump of breathless, lifeless, clay?—Is he who was to purchase life and immortality for sinful man, shut up in a sepulchre, and consigned to corruption?—"We trusted that it had been he "which should have redeemed Israel, and be-"hold he is no more." Had we been present at this sad solemnity, with Joseph, and Nicodemus, and the rest, paying the last mournful honours to our departed Lord, how must our hearts have died away within us to think, that all our faith, and hope, and comfort, were buried under that stone, which covered the mouth of his tomb.—No, our faith should triumph even here, should triumph over death and dissolution; "Did not he himself "say while he was yet with us, destroy this tem-"ple, and in three days I will raise it up again?"

It was impossible that he should be held under the power of corruption, which leads me to the

Third point of view in which our blessed Lord is represented in the text—He rose again.—Now indeed it is finished—now are our faith and our hope confirmed — now is our salvation accomplished, secured—behold him, O believers, who was lately hanging ignominiously betwixt heaven and earth, in the midst of two thieves, racked, mangled, dead—who was three days ago wrapped in grave clothes, and shut up in a tomb—exerting his divinity, rising up to immortal glory, triumphing over death and the grave, proving himself to be "the Son of God with "power." The circumstances attending our blessed Redeemer's resurrection, according as they are related with all imaginable simplicity in the gospels, afford the strongest evidence that can be conceived in support of christianity, afford the strongest consolation that can be conceived to all who build their hopes of happiness in the despised name of Jesus. The unrelenting implacable Jews, not yet satiated with what they had done—their fury not being ended with even the destruction of its object—pursue him even after death—they cannot be satisfied till they have made all secure, till they have taken away, as

they imagine, the very possibility of his troubling them any further—they therefore doubly secure the sepulchre, with a seal and with a strong guard—a defence both against violence and imposition.—Vain, presumptuous man, why will you thus fight againt God? why will you thus enforce your own destruction? "The very wrath "of man, O Lord, shall praise thee"—and the cunning shall be taken in their own craftiness—this very seal and this watch shall serve only the more illustriously to declare what they were meant to prevent—that the Lord is risen, that he is risen indeed—shall only serve to all ages of the world, as a standing proof of this important doctrine, which is and for ever will be the glory of God, the wonder of angels, the confusion of devils and wicked men, the joy, the delight of the christian. "For now, behold there was a great "earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descend-"ed from heaven,* and came and rolled back the "stone from the door, and sat upon it. His "countenance was like lightning, and his rai-"ment was white as snow. And for fear of him, "the keepers did shake, and became as dead "men." And now behold the victorious Son of God, arrayed in all the majesty of omnipotence and immortality, awakening to life, bursting

* Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4.

asunder the chains of death—the glorified, the triumphant head of his church—away then doubt, away mistrust, away despair—welcome hope, welcome faith, welcome joy—" the great " captain of our salvation, who was made per- " fect through suffering, was once dead, is now " alive, and behold he lives for evermore, and " hath the keys of hell and of death." And now, christians, we have taken a short view of a crucified, buried, risen Saviour; let us, as was proposed in the

Second place, attend to the improvement we ought to make of these great and important events which we have been solemnly commemorating this day. And are we indeed persuaded of these things, according as we have professed? Do we indeed believe that Christ died, died for our sins?—Do we profess to be deeply affected with what the innocent Lamb of God suffered upon our account?—Have we a fellow-feeling in his wounds, and bruises, and stripes?—and does the consideration that these were endured for us really touch our hearts with compunction and gratitude?—O let our gratitude appear in its effects. Were our blessed Lord now in person to put the question he once did to Peter, " Simon, son of

"Jonas, lovest thou me?" is there one here so base, so dull, so unthankful, as to be at a loss for a reply?—I trust you could with one voice appeal to the searcher of hearts and answer, "Lord, "thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love "thee." O then let your love appear in your new obedience. Much more is expected, and very justly, from you, O communicants, than from those who do not chuse to make any such profession—the eyes of the world are upon you—the enemies of religion are waiting with eager expectation to see you dishonour your profession; they wish for nothing more than to see you give into the same excesses with themselves: and will you gratify them? will you thus do disgrace to the cross of Christ? will you thus, like dastardly traitors, deny, betray your master, and vilify the worthy name by which you are called? The eyes of Christ's friends are upon you—they are jealous over you with a holy jealousy—they will rejoice if you hold fast your profession, if you walk worthy of your christian vocation—but, O, it will grieve them to the heart if they see you falling from your first love—if they see you denying your name—if they see you giving into the way of the world: and will you deprive them of such a disinterested

pleasure, will you give them pain? The eyes of Christ himself are upon you; with approbation, with love he regards you, so long as you walk as becomes his disciples, his followers—but, O, how must it tear up his wounds afresh, how must it grieve his heart, if a glorified state is capable of such feelings, to see those who have solemnly called themselves his, turning their back upon him, and returning to their idols. Learn then, christians, from what you have done this day, learn to put a negative into the hand of every temptation —"what, shall I do this great wickedness, and "sin against God?" Did not I renounce, solemnly renounce at the table of the Lord, the pleasures of sin, the allurements of the world, and shall I, can I "return with the dog to his vomit, and with "the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the "mire?" Did not I bind myself down by the most solemn engagements to be the Lord's, his wholly, his only?—I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and how can I draw back?—Do we feel a holy indignation arising in our hearts against those cruel, merciless Jews, who insulted, buffeted, scourged, crucified, the meek and holy Jesus—O let us not be partakers of their wickedness—let us not exceed their guilt—they did it with open avowed fury and rancour—but shall we be

false christians under the mask of love and friendship? will any here chuse to match Judas in villainy, and betray the son of man with a kiss? I am sure you abhor the thought.—Do our hearts burn with indignation against that impious inhuman soldier who was capable of committing an outrage upon the dead body of our Lord, by stabbing him to the heart after death, when cruelty itself would have been glutted to the full? O let not us then stab, and wound, a glorified, an exalted Redeemer.

Again. Was Christ buried, consigned to the house of deep forgetfulness, mingled with the dust of death? Let this, my dear friends, reconcile us to the thoughts of dissolution—this is part of the curse which we ourselves must expiate, and, blessed be God, it is all of the curse which is left upon our own heads—that "dust we are, and to "dust we must return." The passage indeed is solemn, it is gloomy, and it is a horror to nature. Our Lord himself, as a man, recoiled at the prospect, hence that fervent prayer—"Father, if it be "thy will, let this cup pass from me"—but yet he avoided it not, but yet he encountered the dread enemy in all his terror—"nevertheless, not my "will, but thine be done." Our chief care should

be to prepare for death, leaving the time and manner of it to him who ordereth all things wisely and well—and this day's work, christians, is no improper preparation. I trust there are not a few hearing me, who could gladly have terminated this state of being with this solemn service, who could cheerfully have stept from the table of the Lord into a world of spirits—having with the apostle "a desire to depart and to be with Christ:" happy, happy are ye, how are you to be envied, who have got above the fears of death, who have nothing to do but resign your spirits into your Saviour's hands, and to lie down quietly in the dust. We would all do well to reflect that we hold life upon a very uncertain tenure—it is probable that many, it is almost certain that some of such a goodly number of communicants will, before the return of a similar solemnity, be called home to their father's house: while your fellow christians, at the stated time, shall be again viewing a crucified Jesus through the glass of ordinances, you shall be beholding him face to face—you shall celebrate the next gospel passover in the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, sitting at a table which shall never be drawn—ye shall be "come unto mount Sion, and unto the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,

" and to an innumerable company of angels. " To the general assembly and church of the " firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to " God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just " men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator " of the new covenant*." O live as if you were assured this was to be the case; the contrary is certain to none. Let this likewise reconcile our minds to all the trials and difficulties of our probationary state, however hard and severe they may be, they will, they must soon come to an end—the journey, though rough and wearisome, is but short —the racking of pain, the pining of grief, the stings of poverty, the pangs of disappointment, the malice and reproach of the world, can pursue us no farther than the grave —death will, ere long, put an end to all our troubles, and with the same blow kill us and them. In the grave all is silent and peaceful, no strife of tongues, no boisterous unruly passions—no cruel persecuting enemies, no false deceitful friends. Here " the " wicked cease from troubling, and the weary " are at rest." Happy, happy, envied state—how much to be preferred to all the unreal illusive bliss in the pursuit of which the giddy sons of men are so eagerly engaged. In the

* Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

Third and last place, Is Christ risen again from the dead? has he triumphed over the last enemy? —Lift up your heads then, O christians, and rejoice, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh; he is faithful who hath promised, "I will "ransom them from the power of the grave; I will "redeem them from death: O death, I will "be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy de-"struction *."—"Now is Christ risen from the "dead, and become the first fruits of them that "slept. For since by man came death, by man "came also the resurrection from the dead. For "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall "all be made alive. But every man in his own "order: Christ the first fruits, afterwards they "that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh "the end, when he shall have delivered up the "kingdom to God, even the Father; when he "shall have put down all rule, and all authority, "and power. For he must reign, till he hath "put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy "that shall be destroyed is death †.—By and by "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this "mortal shall put on immortality." Our Lord's resurrection, as the apostle proves at large through this chapter, is both a proof and a pledge of ours.

* Hosea xiii. 14. † 1 Cor. xv. 20—26.

Let us sing therefore with triumph, as in the fifty-fifth verse, "O death, where is thy sting? "O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to "God who giveth us the victory through our "Lord Jesus Christ *." Amen.

* 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

SERMON XI.

ACTS iv. 33.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

THE resurrection of the Lord Jesus, christians, is the occasion of this day's meeting, and it is to be the subject of this day's discourse. I am to speak to you of that, which alone can worthily animate my labours, and stimulate my zeal, and you are to hear of that, for which only one could bear to live or dare to die. The present hour is to be devoted to the contemplation of that, for which time was created and continues, and which will, ere long, swallow up time in eternity, and death in victory—and even these frail perishing bodies are now to join in a service which looks directly forward to that blessed day which shall see them rise glorious, incorruptible, immortal.

And may the Spirit of him "who liveth and "was dead, and is alive for evermore, who holds "the keys of hell and of death," breathe upon our dead souls, that they may live—live to holiness, live to heaven, live to God, live to their risen, living Redeemer!

In thinking of this elevating subject, where shall our astonishment and delight begin or end? with the all-glorious divine person, whom it represents to us? or the great event in his history which it particularizes? or the amazing effects it has produced?—Does not each of these lead us into an extensive field of the most pleasant and profitable meditation, that can employ our minds? especially in so near a prospect of solemnly remembering the dying love of Christ.—Let us first then,

I. Think a little on the all-glorious person, who has so just a claim to our attention and our love—"The Lord Jesus"—a name like ointment poured forth. If we stretch the eye to the utmost strain in looking back into eternity, we behold *him* enthroned the everlasting Father, the mighty God. If we resort to time's first instant, behold *him* then creating worlds on worlds, speaking, and it is done, commanding, and it

stands fast. If we advance to creation's sixth day, lo, *he* makes man of the dust of the ground, and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life—forms him in his own image after his own likeness. Trace we the chain of providence from the formation of Adam down to the infant who is now drawing its first breath, from the word which said, "Let there be light," down to that which commanded this morning's sun to arise, we see *him* incessantly directing and upholding all things by the word of his power.—Expatiate we in the field of free sovereign grace—from, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head "of the serpent"—to "behold I come quickly" —all is of *him*, and for *him*, and to *him*.—And, think, O my soul, what he has been and is to thee—he appointed all the circumstances of thy birth, and preservation, and education—he took thee up from the womb, and cherished, and fed, and comforted thee.—When thy mother sustained thee with her own blood and substance, and thy father with the sweat of his brows fondly provided thy food and thy raiment, it was he who inspired their tenderness, and added his blessing to their pains and zeal. He taught thy tongue to speak, and thy heart to know wisdom. He fixed the bounds of thy habitation, and gave thee an establishment among the children of

men. His bounty gives thee day by day thy daily bread, and every night his watchful care encompasses and protects thy bed—his arm supports thee when thou art ready to sink, his pity succours thee in sickness, and his vigour continues thee in health.

But even these, O my much indebted soul, great as they are, do not make up the thousandth part of the love of the Lord Jesus to thee—these are mere ordinary favours, common blessings, compared to the special grace he has vouchsafed thee. "He loved thee with an everlasting "love, and with great kindness did he gather "thee." Go to Calvary, and behold him bearing thy sins upon his own body on the tree—think what thou and all mankind must have been, had not his divine compassion interposed—had the sword of justice awaked and smitten not the shepherd, but the wandering defenceless sheep. Nor is this all, for to thee Christ might have died in vain, had not the same love which constrained him to die, constrained him also to communicate the benefits of his death unto thee. Once thou wert a careless, thoughtless, perishing sinner—laid asleep on the very brink of hell—but his kindness would not suffer thee to drop in; mercy restrained the hand of justice, which was extended

to cut asunder the brittle thread, whereby thou wert suspended over the fiery gulf—his gentle hand awakened thee—his finger pointed out thy danger—his voice persuaded thee to fly from the wrath to come, and to lay hold upon eternal life. When Satan has assaulted thee with all his fiery darts, did not he spread the shield of his protection over thy head? When conscience probed all the painful wounds which sin had made, did not he pour the healing balm of his pardoning mercy into them, and tenderly bind them up again? When the devil and the world have accused and condemned, has not he justified thee? And is it not he, who this day invites thee to eat of the children's bread, to taste the hidden manna, to drink of the water of life? who is coming forth to meet thee with complacency, that he may introduce thee into the banqueting house, and feast thee with his love? Has not he said, "I will never leave "thee nor forsake thee?"—"When thou passest "through the waters, I will be with thee; and "through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: "when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not "be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon "thee." *This* is that Lord Jesus, who is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last—whom the prophecies foretold, whom the apostles preached, whom angels worship, in whom men are saved,

before whom devils tremble—that Lord Jesus, whom earth received—"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," whom heaven now beholds "at the right hand of power," and whom an assembled universe shall, ere long, discover, "coming in the clouds with power and great glory." And, what shall I say, communicants? that Lord Jesus, whom you are now to have the honour and happiness of acknowledging before angels and men, as your only Lord and Master—as your all-gracious, all-mighty Redeemer—as your guide through life, your support and comfort at death, and your portion and joy to eternity. Can you ever think, can you ever speak enough of him who is so infinitely amiable and glorious in himself, and who is so transcendently and peculiarly amiable in his grace to you. Let Jacob express his love to his Rachel by a cheerful servitude of twice seven years—let Jonathan express his friendship to his David, by a voluntary renunciation of the kingdom in his favour—let Joseph discover his brotherly affection to his Benjamin, by giving him a fivefold portion—and David the yearning of paternal tenderness, by wishing to die in the room of his Absalom—be it thy study and thy ambition, O christian, to live and to die unto the Lord Jesus, who died for thee. In despite of socinian blasphemy, in despite of infidel

scorn, in despite of worldly slight and opposition, dare to acknowledge him as the supreme Jehovah, as the true and living word, and as the eternal and only power and wisdom of God unto salvation.—Let us now, in the

Second place, fix our attention upon that great event which is here particularized — namely, "the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Providence has clearly exercised a peculiar care about this event, and confirmed the truth of it with a peculiar strength of evidence, and the apostles lay the whole weight of their ministration upon this foundation. And it was surely of the last importance that this single fact, "the "Lord is risen," should be fully established, as the whole structure of christianity stands or falls with it; for "if Christ be not risen, our preaching "is vain, and your faith is also vain."

The truth of Christ's death has never been called in question; the Jews made fully sure of that, and one of the soldiers, who was employed to see the sentence of death executed to the last iota, made doubly sure of the matter, by thrusting his spear into the side of the dead body, till the blood and water gushed out—and it was the

the warning given. Hear the accumulated evidence as laid down by Paul, "I delivered unto "you first of all that which I also received, "how that Christ died for our sins according to "the scriptures: and that he was buried, and "that he rose again the third day according to "the scriptures. And that he was seen of Cephas, "then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of "above five hundred brethren at once; of whom "the greater part remain unto this present, but "some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of "James; then of all the apostles: and last of "all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of "due time *." Is it any wonder then, that the apostles built so much upon this foundation as we find they did?—that when a fellow apostle is to be ordained to that office, it is, that he may be a co-witness of Christ's resurrection?—that their mutual congratulation should be, "The "Lord is risen indeed?"—that the burden of their preaching should be, "Christ died and rose again?" —for this once established, and, glory to God, it is established, the christian faith stands upon a rock, against which "the gates of hell never "shall prevail."

What next summons our attention on this subject, are the wonderful effects which the

* 1 Cor. xv. 3—8.

doctrine of the resurrection has produced—and the more immediate effects of the event itself are surely very astonishing. To hear Christ say to a body which had been dead four days, "Lazarus come forth," and to see that body instantly obey the call, must fill us with a very lofty idea of his sovereign power; but how must that idea be raised, when we see the dead body of Christ himself triumphing over death, and bursting asunder the bars of the grave—when we see a mangled bleeding corpse, in three days, and at the appointed hour, emerging from the tomb, a glorious, a spiritual body—and when we see heaven sending down one of her brightest inhabitants to announce and record the memorable transaction—when we see the earth quaking, the rock rending, the stone removing out of its place, and men's hearts quaking for fear—and all this in virtue of the exerted power of him who the other day hung in agony, an insulted, despised, humbled man, on yonder accursed tree—whose soul in bitterness complained, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken "me!" Who would have thought that the ignominy of that dismal scene would have been so soon, so effectually, and so gloriously wiped away? None but he who can believe the word

which Christ himself spake, "Destroy this tem-" ple, and in three days I will raise it again." But,

Farther, the effect of the resurrection is most wonderful, if we attend to it, as produced in the minds of the apostles and disciples themselves. It let them farther into their master's character and design than ever they had got before. They often disbelieved the truths he delivered; they either were inattentive to, or forgot, or misapprehended the miracles which he performed. He taught them the certainty and the necessity of his sufferings and death; but they would not understand, because they could not relish such doctrine: but after this grand concluding miracle was wrought, they began to see and to believe that their master's kingdom was not of this world—they assumed a boldness unknown to them before—they undervalued opposition, threatenings, imprisonment, and death—they rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame "for the name of Christ"—instead of flying from or trembling before the multitude, behold the multitude in their turn trembling before them! —behold the very men, who but a few days ago all forsook their master and fled, now standing

in the temple, in the synagogue, in the streets, and preaching the gospel of his kingdom—behold Peter, whom the question of a simple maid lately filled with terror, now braving the resentment of the whole Sanhedrim—behold unlearned and ignorant men, instructed simply in this and a few other concomitant plain facts, rousing the consciences, informing the judgments, changing the hearts, and amending the lives of thousands of the bitterest enemies of the truths they delivered—behold persons who would hardly believe the resurrection themselves, now with great power employing it as the means of pulling down Satan's kingdom, and of destroying unbelief, its main support. Never was one man so unlike another, as they on a sudden are to themselves—and the wonderful change is only to be accounted for, from the Holy Spirit's teaching them that "his "soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see "corruption. That this Jesus hath God raised "up. That God hath made that same Jesus," who was crucified, "both Lord and Christ *."

Farther, the effects of the resurrection are most evident and most astonishing, as wrought in the opposers of its truth and efficacy. It

* Acts, ii. 31, 32, 36.

first reduces them to use a paultry, improbable, self-destroying fiction, to invalidate the evidence of the fact, which sober enquirers have ever considered as constituting, through their over-abundant anxiety and zeal, one of its strongest pillars. Finding they were not able to discredit it, finding it daily gained ground with the people, and grieved at the progress and success of a doctrine which they hated, they turn loose their fury upon the harmless propagators of it. Can there be a more amazing or more affecting picture of the enmity of the human heart against God? and did we not know by experience many woful instances of the same kind, this were perhaps the most wonderful thing in the whole gospel history—that men, without any provocation, without the prospect of interest, alarmed by no danger, attacked by no violence, on the contrary, allured by the most attractive charms of goodness, solicited by all the arguments of disinterested benevolence and love, and overpowered by all the weight of evidence, should vilify and oppose the character and doctrine of Jesus Christ, this is such unmixed, unaccountable, disinterested malignity, as must sufficiently evince the corruption of the heart, were the knowledge of it conveyed through no other channel.

But, blessed be God, we can contrast these with as wonderful effects of an opposite kind, namely, those which in every age have been produced in the hearts and consciences of them that believe in a risen Saviour. While some retained their prejudices, others deposited theirs in the tomb where the Lord lay. By Peter's preaching this doctrine at the feast of Pentecost immediately after the resurrection, in one day there were added to the disciples and to the Lord three thousand souls; by and by we find them increased to five thousand—since that time, myriads in every age have, by the same means, been brought to "the knowledge and love of the truth "as it is in Jesus"—and when "the general as-"sembly and church of the first-born" shall be completed, it shall be "a great multitude, which "no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, "and people, and tongues." I would retire within these walls, and look for the same glorious effects in many blessed instances. Christian communicant, believest thou that Jesus is risen? I know that thou believest, and that thou art ready, in whatever manner providence calls upon thee, to seal that faith—at the Lord's table to-day, on the scaffold or at the stake to-morrow, if it be thy Master's will. All praise be to our exalted head, that while so many slight his gos-

pel, there is found such a goodly number who are not ashamed of it, who glory in it, and who are in some measure conformed to it,

And now may the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead, give us to be filled with peace and joy in believing, and make this holy ordinance spirit and life to our souls—and grant that henceforth "bearing about in the body "the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life also "of Christ may be made manifest in us. And now "unto him who is the faithful witness, and the "first begotten of the dead, and the prince of "the kings of the earth, unto him that loved us "and washed us from our sins in his own blood, "and hath made us kings and priests unto God "and his Father; to him be glory and dominion "for ever and ever. Amen *."

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

SERMON XII.

LUKE xxiv. 30, 31.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.
And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

CHRIST WITH THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS.

THESE words carry us back to the evening of that ever memorable day, whose dawning beheld the Lord of life triumphantly burst asunder the bars of the grave—and they contain the conclusion of a very affecting interview between the risen Saviour and two of his disciples. The matter was this; On the same day that Christ arose from the dead, these two disciples, who appear no where in the gospel history but on this occasion, ignorant of the great event which had taken place, at least doubting the truth of it, retire betimes from Jerusalem, which, besides the usual bustle and confusion of great.

cities, was at that time filled with the noise of the recent interesting transactions, that in the retirement and silence of the country they might enjoy the benefit of contemplation, and converse one with another—probably to withdraw themselves from the insults to which their attachment to the crucified Jesus exposed them in the city. They bend their course toward Emmaus, a small village at the distance of about eight miles from the capital, and upon the road their conversation turns, how could it do otherwise? upon the things which had so lately happened, and in which they were so deeply concerned—their fears preponderate, and their countenances assume a correspondent sadness. In the mean time Jesus himself, now clothed with a spiritual body, which is no more subject to the laws of matter, and time, and space, approaches to them in the form of a stranger, joins their company, and observing the sorrow which was visible in their looks, kindly enquires into the cause of it From their lips he hears a repetition of the sad tale of his own sufferings and their despondency. This leads him, still in the character of a stranger, to open up to them the truth of God in scripture concerning himself, and to evince the necessity of Christ's sufferings, and the glory which should follow, and from thence to reprove their folly and

unbelief in mistrusting the true and faithful and covenant-keeping God. Charmed with his conversation, not irritated by his reproof, they constrain him to desist from his seemingly intended farther prosecution of his journey, and to abide with them at the village, which they had now reached. The day was far spent, the evening was come, and having still greater love to manifest to them, he suffers himself to be detained. Their sober meal is served up, "and it came to "pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, "and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them." It were an unnecessary and an unprofitable applipplication of your time to enter at present into the dispute, whether the entertainment here described were an ordinary meal to refresh and support nature, or a celebration of that ordinance which he had instituted the same night in which he was betrayed, and which we are this day to celebrate, as the improvement is the same which soever of them were the case—the great thing in request being, that Christ may sit at meat with us, whether at those tables which we call our own, or at that which is peculiarly his—that he may abundantly bless our provision both of a temporal and spiritual sort, and make himself known to us, whether in the productions of

nature, the events of providence, or the ordinances of grace; and enable us to trust in him, and cleave to him, even when he is pleased to "vanish out of our sight."

A closer attention to these things may, through the blessing of God, be useful toward composing our minds for the solemn service before us; and for leading us to God and Christ in the more ordinary enjoyments and occurrences of human life. And may God enable us to do all things to the glory of his great name.

Let us then enter into the scene before us, and consider how good and how pleasant it is to have Christ sitting at meat with us. Suppose it our own home, and our own board—suppose yourself, my friend, with Cleopas and his fellow, seated by the side of Jesus, and Jesus entering into all your domestic cares and joys—Is your table loaded with plenty? Are your garners full? Hath God blessed thy basket and thy store? Is not the plenty of thy plenty, the joy of thy joy, the bounty of Christ who gives it, and Christ's covenant of peace which conveys it, and Christ's presence which partakes of it with thee? What is it to enjoy the fulness of this world, accom-

panied with the Creator of the world? to hear the grant of it conveyed in such terms as these —"Take these, my brother, my sister, my friend, "as some of the effects and expressions of my "love to thee—take and use them as the gift of "a friend, who rejoices in all thy joy, and who "will never rest till he has brought thee to the "fulness of it. Receive them as a pledge of the "greater, better things I have laid up in store for "thee—thou hast no cause to say I love thee, "compared to what thou shall have ere long—this "is but the bread and water of a perishing cor- "ruptible world—by and by I will feed thee "with more than the finest of the wheat, and honey "from the rock—even with angels food, with "the fruit of the trees which grow in the midst "of the paradise of God, and with living water "which flows from the eternal throne." Are you not beforehand with me, O christian, in replying—"Blessed Jesus, it is enough, it is "enough that thou art here. Could we need "these sensible things to give us assurance of "thy love to us? Dost thou indeed condescend "to speak to our very eyes and ears and other "bodily organs, to convince us of thy kind- "ness? Gracious Lord! it is, it is too much. "With gratitude, with cheerfulness we accept "thy gifts, because thou givest thyself with

"them. May we not appeal to thyself, that they "were welcome, that they are precious to us, not "for any good inherent in themselves, but for the "relation they bear to thee, and the good they "derive from thee. Should we not reject them "with scorn, with indignation, did they but once "attempt to separate either themselves or us, "from thee?"

But on the other hand, christian, it may be that the good things of this life are administered to thee with a sparing hand—perhaps thy bread is given thee by weight, and thy water by measure, or they may be turned into the bitter bread and water of affliction. There is, however, one way to sweeten them—the presence of the Redeemer—if he sit at meat with thee, how sweetly will a dry morsel or a dinner of herbs relish? Is it not better than all the stores and dainties of riches and pride, to see thy scanty pittance coming immediately from the hand of thy Saviour, and to see him giving to thee nothing but what he took to himself? This is to be one of the five thousand who beheld their God in person dispensing their food to them, and their food miraculously multiplying and increasing in his hands. The entertainment which Emmaus afforded to persons of the quality and figure of the disciples was, I

dare say, homely enough; but it was enriched and ennobled by a circumstance which the delicacies and magnificence of the great do not often enjoy—Christ was there—a circumstance which converts a dungeon into a palace, and a prisoner's fare into both fulness and pleasantness.

But what is it to sit at meat with Christ, at that table which he calls *his* with a peculiar propriety? You are indeed his guests every day, for you have no property in your own houses or tables, except what he gives you—but to-day you are more highly honoured than at other times—to-day our greater, our New Testament Joseph issues his sovereign command, "Bring "these men home, and slay, and make ready; "for these men shall dine with me at noon." Think what it is

> "To see him at his table head,
> "With living water, living bread;
> "His happy guests incessant load
> "With all the plenitude of God."

O ecstatic entertainment! to behold the Son of God and the Saviour of the world with outstretched arms and accents of tenderness welcoming his friends—"this is my body broken "for you—this is the New Testament in my

"blood shed for the remission of your sins. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, "O beloved." What a choice repast to a condemned wretch is the pardon of his crime, or to an imprisoned debtor the remission of his debt, and a discharge from confinement—but what is even this, O intended communicant, compared to the provision which your Saviour is with his own hand, this day, setting before you?—a writ of exemption, not from a gibbet, a block, or a stake, but from the "sting of the worm which "dieth not," and from the torment of the fire which is unquenchable—a remission not of debts but of sins, and not only this, but a title to an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which "fadeth not away."—To be with Christ at his table! What is this, my brethren, but to be in heaven already? for his presence makes heaven—the want of it changes earth and heaven itself into hell. But

II. Another great requisite to a christian is, that his Saviour should *abundantly bless* his provision, both temporal and spiritual. It is not enough that Christ be present, but that he be graciously present—for he may be with us at our meals and our religious services to blast as well as to bless. Here, and on many similar occasions, we

behold him lifting up his hands and his eyes to heaven, and blessing the bread which he was about to break—and after his example, it is usual with us, both to begin and conclude our meals, with acknowledging the sovereign bounty which "gives us all things richly to enjoy." But this is too often apt to degenerate into a mere form, and we appear much unconcerned, whether we are heard or not. How little of Jacob's spirit is felt, how little is his example imitated! who wrestled and made supplication, "I will "not let thee go except thou bless me," and "as a prince had power with God and pre- "vailed." The blessing of Christ, my brethren, makes our comforts doubly comfortable, our common mercies covenant-favours, and our severest trials unspeakable benefits—say then, is it not earnestly to be desired, and with importunity to be intreated? And what think you would be the happy effect of an habitual craving, and obtaining the divine blessing upon our various circumstances and conditions in life?—how would it guard the heart against the too well-known extremes of insolence and pride in prosperity, and dejection and discontent in adversity—how should we then glory even in tribulation, and contemn the world, and smile at death.

But of how much greater importance still is this blessing to our spiritual provision; how often does Paul plant, and Apollos water in vain? To how little purpose are the best sermons often preached and heard—and the sacraments dispensed, and duties performed! How unprofitably are the scriptures read, and prayer made, and praise rendered! And why? Because God withholds the increase, and denies the blessing. And, O christians, how insipid and unpleasant will this day be, unless the great Master of the feast be pleased in mercy to bless his own ordinance, and thereby make the bread which we break, and the cup of blessing whereof we partake, indeed the communion of his own body and blood. Blessed Jesus, our eyes are toward thee, we wait for thy call, we look up for thy sacred benediction, we cannot be satisfied with the shadow, we cannot rest in the outward court, we long to hear thy gracious invitation; "Come in, thou blessed of "the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" —I will abundantly bless thy provision, and satisfy thee with bread, and cause thee to shout for joy. Though all the saints on earth, and all the angels in heaven, should combine in pronouncing their benediction on these elements, they must remain mere elements still, no food for

an immortal spirit, till the glorious Lord of saints and angels give the word, and by his blessing transform these natural things into spirit and life.

III. The text informs us, that "while he blessed "the bread, and brake it, and gave it to them, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him;" which intimates to us these two plain but important truths; first, That Christ is sometimes present with his people, and communicating good to them, before they are sensible of it; and, secondly, That all things in nature, in providence, and in grace, are good only as they bring us to the sight of the Saviour; to which we may add a third, equally precious and important, that sooner or later he will manifest himself to his own. With regard to the first of these, the christian is often in the state of Jacob at Luz, he sees God as it were only in a vision of the night, and is insensible of the divine visit till it is over, and then he is made to cry out, "Surely Jehovah "is in this place, and I knew it not"—they have been admitted into a "Bethel, an house of God," and to "the gate of heaven," but did not know how high they were exalted, till they felt themselves upon the earth again. Christ opens the

scriptures to them, converses with them, sits by them, blesses their provision, and portions it out to them, gives them a parting unveiled glance of him, that they may be certain it was he himself, and then withdraws. Canst thou recollect, christian, nothing like this in thy own experience? Was there never a time when, in reading, in hearing, in prayer, in praise, in meditation, in communicating, some one seemed to talk with thee, and instruct thee, and to attend thy footsteps, and make thy heart to burn within thee, but like the disciples on the mount of transfiguration, thou wert so dazzled with the surrounding glory, that the departure of it alone could bring thee to thyself; but like them too, have you not on such occasions heard the divine voice accompany the departing revelation, and say, "this is my "beloved son?" from which learn, that thy safety, and thy felicity likewise, consist rather in Christ's seeing and knowing thee, than in your sight and knowledge of him.—But,

Again, all things whatsoever are truly good, only as they bring us to the vision of Christ the Lord.—"Light is sweet to the eyes, and a plea-"sant thing it is to behold the face of the sun." Delightful is the prospect of "pastures clothed

" with flocks, and valleys covered over with corn, " and little hills rejoicing on every side"—glorious to the sight the wide expanded vault of heaven, bespangled with its numberless greater and lesser gems of light—and beautifully astonishing the regular succession of days, and nights, and seasons—but when in thy beams, O sun, when in your riches, O meadows, and plains, and mountains, when in your brightness, O moon and stars, when in your order and harmony, spring and summer, harvest and winter, I discern the glory, the bounty, the wisdom and power of my Redeemer, then are you glorious indeed—and thou, universal nature, when in thee I discover the sovereign Creator who established thy laws, and who can suspend and alter them at his pleasure, then I wonder, then I praise, then I adore.

How wonderful, how incomprehensible thy mystery, O providence! What changes and revolutions, from unknown springs, from unthought of causes, by improbable means, art thou producing in the world? But what is providence? the supreme power and wisdom of my all-gracious, compassionate Redeemer, reducing confusion into order, making light to arise out of darkness, and good out of evil—" the wrath of " men" and of devils, my Lord and my God,

"shall praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou "shalt restrain." I see and know this but in part now, as in a glass darkly—by and by I shall see the chain extended, its intricacies unravelled, and its mystery unriddled, and see thee in every line and every link.

The same thing may be said of the means of grace—the ordinances of the gospel. When we discover Christ in them, they are wells of salvation, living streams of comfort—but when we have no object but themselves, when we rest in them, and make them our end, they immediately degenerate into mere empty, lifeless forms. When we address ourselves, therefore, to religious duty of any kind, it ought to be in the spirit of the devout Greeks, who applied to Philip for the very same purpose, "Sir, we "would see Jesus"—and use them as Zaccheus did the sycamore tree, help the shortness of our own stature by them, and raise ourselves above the crowd, that we may at least gain a glimpse of the Saviour as he passes by. If the holy ordinance now to be dispensed is made through the divine blessing to answer this end, it may be the blessed means of introducing us to a further and more intimate acquaintance, and Christ in his turn may give us a look of mercy, and address

us as he did Zaccheus, "Come down quickly, for "to-day I must abide at thy house."

But further on this branch of the subject, I observed, that it is implied, that sooner or later Jesus Christ will manifest himself to his own—he will not always wear the form of a stranger, though, for wise ends, he may see meet to do it for a while. He hides himself only to excite and animate our inquiries after him—have you missed him, then, christian, in one ordinance? search more diligently for him in another—though you have not been sensible of his presence while he walked with you by the way, or while he opened to you the scriptures, yet your eyes may be opened to behold him in the breaking of bread—or should this too fail, desist not from the pursuit, seek him in secret, seek him in the wilderness of the world, seek him in the diligent prosecution of your lawful worldly employments, in favourable, in afflictive providence, seek him in the valley of the shadow of death. And should all these fail, there is one blessed retreat still, there is one place where, of a certainty he shall be found—in heaven you shall not, cannot miss him, for there you shall be like him, and see him as he is, and be for ever with the Lord.

And then for ever farewell to Job's anxious inquiry and complaint, "O that I knew where I "might find him! Behold, I go forward, but he "is not there; and backward, but I cannot per- "ceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, "but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on "the right hand that I cannot see him." In which blessed hope, you can console yourselves under every present discouragement and disappointment, saying with Balaam in prophetic vision, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall be- "hold him, but not nigh—the star of Jacob and "the sceptre of Israel *shall* rise:" or with Job, in a happier frame and temper than that which appears in his complaint just now recited, "I "know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall "stand at the latter day upon the earth; and "though after my skin worms destroy this body, "yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall "see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and "not another, though my reins be consumed "within me."

Your time will not permit us to enter upon the consideration of the last particular contained in my text, but from what hath been suggested to you, learn in the

First place, the importance of frequent meditation and converse upon the sufferings of Christ, and of withdrawing often from a noisy world for this purpose. It is then you have reason to expect that Christ himself will make one in your retirement or your society. And O how much is it to be regretted, that the professed disciples of Jesus afford so few opportunities to their great Master of this kind—and more to be regretted still, how many strive to chase him away, instead of inviting his presence. Is it any wonder, in such cases, if he make to himself opportunities of conversing with us in the way of controversy, of judgment, and of just displeasure, seeing we wilfully decline the visits of his love? O that we better understood the great ends of nature, of providence, and of grace—that we might enjoy more of communion with God in them.

2dly. Has the Saviour joined himself to us? let us strive to detain him, who wishes to be detained. When one whom we love has come to our house, we are generally unwilling to listen to his first motion toward departing; we wish, we solicit, his longer stay—let us deal with our best, our heavenly friend, as we would with an earthly one, give him reason to believe we are happy in

his presence, and wish that happiness prolonged —but instead of this, how often do men treat their Saviour, as they would an impertinent unseasonable visitor, discover uneasiness and constraint while he remains, and rejoice when he takes his leave.

3dly. Do we indeed desire and love the presence of Christ? let us not always wait till he come to us, but go frequently out to meet him, and seek him where he is most probably to be found. As we would wish the Saviour to be a frequent guest with us, we must be customary stated guests with him—often flying to his house for shelter, and to his table for food, and to his conversation for improvement. Are you not come up hither to-day, christians, for this end? The great master of the feast, we trust, bids you welcome, and will not send you away empty. O may our eyes be opened to see him, and our hearts to love him—and may he henceforth take up his residence with us. "O the hope of "Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, "why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the "land, and as a wayfaring man, that turneth "aside to tarry for a night? Yet thou, O Lord, "art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy "name; leave us not."

4thly, and lastly. As one mean of keeping the Saviour in view here, be frequently looking forward to his second glorious appearance—when every eye shall see him, and eternally see him. This most important of all events, is, in the holy ordinance of the supper, immediately presented to our minds. "As often," says the Apostle, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do "shew forth the Lord's death till he come." Why do we under these elements of bread and wine consider and contemplate the dying of the Lord Jesus but that faith may do for us now, what sense will do ere long;—and "when that which is "perfect is come, then that which is in part shall "be done away." Look then within the vail; from the Pisgah top, to which Jesus is now conducting you, survey the promised land—it is but a little while and Jordan shall divide, and afford you a safe passage into it, and then your eyes shall see "the King in his beauty." "You shall "see his face in righteousness, and shall be sa-"tisfied when you awake with his likeness: and so "shall we ever be with the Lord."

SERMON XIII.

ROMANS viii. 34.

It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

FOR THE EVENING OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON THE INTERCESSION.

YOU have heard, my brethren, of Jacob's vision at Bethel, of the ladder "set up on the "earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven; "and the angels of God ascending and descend-"ing on it *." What he saw in a dream, in a vision of the night—what he saw at a distance, and in a figure, you have this day beheld in substance, in meridian splendour, in the person of Jesus Christ, the great uniter of heaven and earth, the mediator betwixt God and man; who, by the junction of the human to the divine nature, has formed a connection between this and the heavenly world, which Satan cannot

* Gen. xxviii. 12.

disturb, nor death dissolve, nor the flames of the general conflagration consume.—And though he has returned from whence he came, yet his present employment preserves the union entire; his intercession continues and confirms what his everlasting love designed and began, and his incarnation declared.—Along this golden, indissoluble chain, the gifts of God glide gently down to men, and the prayers, and praises, and holy desires of the saints, ascend to God. Many in this place have, I hope, this day, by the eye of faith, discerned the foot of the ladder standing on that communion table, nay, have felt it fixed in their hearts. Let us endeavour to prolong the heavenly vision, let us yet once more lift up our eyes to our exalted Redeemer, and stretch our ears to hear the gracious words which proceed from his lips, to which all heaven with rapture listens, and which the ear of God himself hears well-pleased—"He also maketh inter-"cession for us." This naturally leads, in the first place, to consider the circumstances in our condition, which render the continual exercise of this office of our blessed Lord necessary to us. I am at present to speak only of those, and to those, who really have an interest in the intercession of Christ, whom he has "engraven

"upon the palms of his hands." To such I would say, my dear friends, your many remaining heart-plagues, and in-dwelling corruptions, loudly call for the kind interposition of your tender-hearted Redeemer — he sees them as offensive to a holy God, and distressing to your own souls, as marring your communion with heaven, and plunging you in the deep mire of this world; and his benevolent design is to "deliver you from "the bondage of corruption, and to bring you "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." What were you, O christian, left to strive with these in your own strength? All that is requisite to make you completely miserable is to have preserving, assisting grace withdrawn from you, is for your Saviour to intermit his care, and your own heart would accomplish the work of hell. How much more necessary is his interposition, when it is considered, that inward corruption is exposed to and solicited by manifold, dangerous, violent temptations from without—Satan sometimes "transformed "into an angel of light," trying to deceive, and at other times, into "a roaring lion," seeking to devour—the world now alluring the unguarded, unsuspicious heart with her smiles, and anon intimidating and terrifying the unstable

soul with her threatenings and frowns. Strife how dangerous! Combat how unequal! did he who sits in heaven behold it with an indifferent eye—but a strife which shall end in more than conquest on our side, through him that loveth us.—I would say still farther, christian,

That the fewness, feebleness, and declining state of your graces, require the constant attention of his careful, skilful, protecting hand—to "strengthen the things which are ready to die," to prune away what is luxuriant, to keep alive that which is strong, to plant that which is not—the soil of the human heart is most unfriendly, the climate of this world most unfavourable to growth in grace, were not the word of the interceding Redeemer frequently employed in breaking up the fallow ground, and the influences of his Spirit poured down from time to time to mollify and fertilize. When he becomes as the "dew unto Israel," then all the fruits of righteousness not only grow but abound, then the christian grows "as the lily," and "casts forth "his roots as Lebanon."

The disjointed, jarring, discordant state of the christian world, is another circumstance which

renders the intercession of the common head and Saviour important and necessary—he who knows what is in man, gave this as his new and special commandment to his disciples, that they should love one another—and while he acted as an intercessor upon earth, this was one particular and earnest petition: "Holy Father, keep "through thine own name those whom thou "hast given me, that they may be one, as we "are. That they all may be one; as thou, "Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also "may be one in us: that the world may believe "that thou hast sent me. And the glory which "thou gavest me I have given them; that they "may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and "them in me, that they may be made perfect in "one; and that this world may know that "thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou "hast loved me *." How soon would the fabric dissolve, were it not knit and compacted by this cement! but he who suffers none of those who are given unto him to be taken out of his hands, or to fall away from him, so, in spite of difference in sentiment, in secular interest, in external situation, by this sacred bond of union, he keeps all the members of his body united

* John xvii. 11, 21, 22, 23.

together—hence, though for a time they may be as "children tossed to and fro, and carried "about with every wind of doctrine *;" yet, upon the whole, they "grow up into him in all things, "which is the head, even Christ: from whom the "whole body fitly joined together and com- "pacted by that which every joint supplieth, ac- "cording to the effectual working in the mea- "sure of every part, maketh increase of the body "unto the edifying of itself in love†." He "maketh intercession for us." What a motive to concord is this, that while there are many Paul's, Appollos's, Cephas's, many planters, many waterers, there is but one God, one mediator, one intercessor.—O that the time might speedily arrive, when there should also be but one heart and soul, among professing christians, and but one strife, a strife of love, of zeal, of conformity to the example of Christ. The time shall come: Christ's prayer shall at length be fully answered, and all his shall be one among themselves, as they are one in him. I proceed now to consider what may be implied in the intercession of Christ in our behalf. And in the

First place, it supposes a thorough acquaintance with us, and with our case. A cause which

* Eph. vi. 14. † Eph. iv. 15, 16.

is not perfectly understood by an advocate, he is not likely to plead with ability and success—now the scriptures inform us, that Christ took our nature upon him expressly for this end: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of "flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took "part of the same; that through death he might "destroy him that had the power of death, that "is, the devil; and deliver them who through "fear of death were all their lifetime subject to "bondage. For verily he took not on him the "nature of angels; but he took on him the seed "of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it be"hoved him to be made like unto his brethren, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high "priest in things pertaining to God, to make re"conciliation for the sins of the people. For in "that he himself hath suffered being tempted, "he is able to succour them that are tempted *." He does not now, therefore, plead at large and at random, for he has not only a general, but a particular knowledge of human nature; nay, an intimate knowledge of every individual, much more intimate than any one has of himself. There is not, O man, a wicked thought in the most secret corner of thy heart, but he can search out and expel it; not a sting in thy conscience,

* Heb. ii. 14—18.

which he cannot extract; not an accusation of Satan which he cannot answer and repel; not a doubt or difficulty which he cannot resolve; not a plea in thy favour which he cannot enforce. All that is for, all that is against thee, is equally known to, equally cared for, by him to whom thou hast committed thy everlasting all.

2dly. It is implied that this gracious intercessor enters warmly into our cause, and makes it his own. It is by no means sufficient, that one who is counsel for us inform himself carefully of every important particular, till he become perfect master of the business, unless he heartily adopt it, put himself entirely in our place, and acquire a fellow-feeling with us. What then do the scriptures say of our great advocate with the Father in this view—"We have not an high priest who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infir- "mities, but was in all points tempted as we "are, yet without sin *." Here we see the heart as well as the understanding engaged—all is holy compassionate zeal and affection—here no suspicion can light of indifference or treachery, which have ruined many a good cause, for he who pleads for us, first died for us, founded

* Heb. iv. 15.

his argument in his own blood, and therefore will not, cannot give up his point.

3dly. His constant unwearied application is another observable circumstance in this interesting subject.—This is also noticed and enforced by the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, and illustrated by the history of Melchizedec, after whose similitude Christ was constituted a priest for ever.—Those who were such after the order of Aaron "were many, be-"cause they were not suffered to continue by "reason of death: but this man, because he "continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priest-"hood. Wherefore he is able also to save them "to the uttermost that come unto God by him, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for "them *." The zeal of the most affectionate earthly friend may cool, or his strength fail, or the suit may outlast his life—but nothing of this sort is to be apprehended here, for our "keeper "never slumbers nor sleeps," never relaxes his assiduities, dieth no more; leaves his station at the Father's right hand no more: which leads me to observe, in the

* Heb. vii. 23—25.

Fourth place, the near access which he has at all times to the great Fountain of peace and love. When he intercedes, it is not as a supplicant who may be refused, but with the majesty and authority of a sovereign, who will take no denial. This glory burst forth even while he tabernacled among men, and affords us a blessed specimen of the absolute power which he has now assumed, and exercises: "Father, I will that "they also whom thou hast given me be with "me where I am; that they may behold my "glory which thou hast given me: for thou "lovedst me before the foundation of the "world."—"God so loved the world, that he "gave his only begotten son, that whosoever "believeth in him should not perish, but have "everlasting life. He that spared not his own son, "but delivered him up for us all, how shall he "not with him also freely give us all things?" As he is one with us, and thereby knows all that is necessary and suitable to us, so he is one with the Father, and knows what it is suitable for him to grant, and at what season, and in what manner to grant it. To this then we must surely add,

5thly. That intercession it made not with one, who is hard to be intreated, or difficult of access,

who is averse to the intercessor, or severe toward the miserable client, but who wishes to be intreated, is ready to forgive, and has made the first overtures of peace and reconciliation — nay, "wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O "earth!" who condescends to turn supplicant to his miserable creatures, and beseeches them to be reconciled to himself: I shall quote but two of many texts in proof of this. "For God so "loved the world, that he gave his only be- "gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him "should not perish, but have everlasting life *." —"He that spared not his own Son, but de- "livered him up for us all, how shall he not with "him also freely give us all things †?" When all this is considered, will it not appear, in the

Sixth place, that the intercession of Christ is rather a message of love, telling us that our cause is gained, than the pleading of a cause still in doubt and dependance? the shout of victory and triumph, rather than the noise of an undecided combat? All must sure be well, when the offended party is the first to seek peace, and the mediator omnipotent, and the offender made sensible of his folly—if God is the giver of the

* John iii. 16. † Romans viii. 32.

intercessor, and ever well pleased in him, and the intercessor ever attentive to his benevolent work, then the believer is already in possession of the grace needed and solicited, in possession of pardon, in possession of the Spirit of sanctification, in possession of conquest over sin, and death and hell, in possession of heaven and eternal life. Put then the question in the context, and put it with boldness to an accusing devil and a condemning world, If God be for us who can be against us? and then put the question which follows, every one to his own heart; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? "shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or "famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" and I hope not a few can in humility and faith reply, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor "life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, "nor things present, nor things to come, nor "height, nor depth, nor any other creature, "shall be able to separate us from the love of "God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." From what has been said,

1. Beware of thinking that the intercession of Christ supersedes the necessity of your own frequent and earnest applications to the throne of grace—rather let his ardour and assiduity set

an example of, and inspire yours—think not of being careless, because he is zealous and attentive—think not of sinning because his grace abounds—think not of dealing by your Saviour as some do by his ministers, who neglect them during the days of prosperity and health, and send for them when calamity, or sickness, or the prospect of death overtakes them; who, after a graceless, prayerless life, dream of availing themselves of the piety and prayers of another when they come to die.—You know, christians, that though the mediation of Christ is the one great channel of communication betwixt heaven and earth, there must be an ascent through it from the soul to God, as well as a descent from God to the soul. In the vision of the ladder, of which we spoke, the angels of God are represented as going upwards as well as coming downwards, carrying messages of gratitude and praise from men, as well as bringing messages of love and joy to men. We have a beautiful representation in the same stile, and enforcing the same exhortation in the book of the revelations. "And another angel came and stood at "the altar, having a golden censer; and there "was given unto him much incense, that he "should offer it with the prayers of all saints "upon the golden altar which was before the

"throne: and the smoke of the incense, which "came with the prayers of the saints, ascended "up before God out of the angel's hand*." This surely speaks for itself—the pleasure and profitableness of the duty of prayer will farther recommend it to those who live in the habitual practice of it—such need not to be plied with arguments; such persons, no argument could persuade to part with a privilege, an honour, and a happiness so invaluable.

2. Remember, christians, that Christ is making constant intercession *with* you, as well as *for* you—he pleads in behalf of his greatly declining cause, his much injured authority, his much blasphemed name—he claims your attention to your own sacred character and profession, that you illustrate, that you adorn it—if it is lawful to suppose the arms of the Redeemer were hanging down, or his tongue silent, it must be when his friends desert him and their own mercies; when they digress into and linger in the world; when hey fly to Egypt for help, and put themselves out of his protection; when the ascending angels bring tidings only of backsliding and corruption; when the grieved Spirit is tempted to withdraw his motions, and reproofs, and warnings. It is

* Rev. viii. 3, 4.

mournful indeed when the perverseness of the client renders all the efforts of his advocate vain, and discourages him from carrying on his work. Yet again, Christ pleads with you in behalf of an ignorant, careless, sleeping world, that you use your best endeavours and example to instruct, to rouse, to reform it—he pleads in behalf of a young, rising generation, the seed of his church, that you be at pains to have them early made acquainted with their Creator and Redeemer, with the "one thing needful," which should take place of every other care and pursuit—he pleads in behalf of his distracted divided church, that you do your utmost to "preserve the unity of the spirit "in the bond of peace;" that you strive to heal her breaches, to promote the spirit of love, that with united strength you may sustain and repel the attacks of the common enemy.

3. As you would wish to enjoy more particular and pleasant fruits of Christ's intercession; be at pains to describe to him the evils you labour under, and would wish removed, and the good things you want, and wish to obtain; deal by him, as you would by a friend, whose advice you would like to have in a difficult case, or a physician whom you would consult in a dangerous illness, or a lawyer to whom you would

trust the conduct of an important cause—in all these cases, men love to be minute and particular, and it is their interest so to be; it cannot surely be less so in this case—true it is indeed, information is not here necessary to convey knowledge to your great counsellor, "for he "knows what thing you have need of before you "ask him;" but notwithstanding he loves that you should inquire after him, he enjoins you so to do—and besides, while you inform him of every various circumstance in your condition, you at the same time inform your own consciences, which is no small matter—hence you will perform the important duty of self-examination with more clearness, satisfaction, and success —hence you will be constantly warned what to pursue, and what to avoid—hence you will be stimulated, to "abound more and more in all "the fruits of righteousness, which through "Jesus Christ are to the praise and glory of "God"—hence grace, like the house of David, will wax stronger and stronger, and corruption, like that of Saul, will grow weaker and weaker. When the adversary finds you thus fortified and provided, he will in despair desist from his attacks, as he did from assaulting your great and glorious head, when he found the fortress impregnable: you shall be left wholly in your Saviour's hands,

and he will guard you by his power, guide you by his Spirit, and cheer you with his love, till at length you be brought to that very station which he occupies, to the Father's right hand, "where "there is fulness of joy," and whence flow "rivers of pleasures for evermore."

SERMON XIV.

MATTHEW xxviii. 20. last clause.

Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

THE PERPETUAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

THERE are some objects, my brethren, which, in order to be prized, must be seen seldom, and contemplated at a great distance; others discover new and striking excellencies from a closer inspection and a more intimate acquaintance: some things will stand the test of the ear, but shrink and fade when the eye is applied to them; there are others, the report of which falls infinitely short of the reality, which, seen and considered, constrain us to use the queen of Sheba's exclamation concerning the glory of Solomon, "I believed not the words, until I came, and mine "eyes had seen it: and behold the half was not "told me." Of the former kind are the pomp and

splendour of this world, the majesty of kings, the magnificence of courts, the productions of human skill and power, the attractives of avarice and of ambition—of the latter sort are the productions of nature, the works of God, moral and divine truth, and, in one word, the supreme Being, with all that is immediately related to him.

How lofty are the ideas which a person living in a remote part of our island entertains of this its imperial city—the residence of kings, the assemblage of nobles, the habitation of senates and senators, the centre of commerce, the great repository of merchandize, the store-house of wealth, the concourse of the nations—but let the same person mix with the insipid throng which crowds the palace; let him frequent the places where the nation's judges and representatives assemble; let him traverse the streets, and the round of the curiosities, and he will find his astonishment every moment lessen, his imagination contract itself, towers, and palaces, and spires decrease in number, diminish in size, decay in beauty; the glory departs, the magic dispels, acquaintance produces familiarity, familiarity is followed by indifference, and indifference ends in disgust.

But who ever thought meanly of the bright orb which illuminates the world from beholding his splendor a thousand and a thousand times? who ever imagined the vast expanse of heaven contracted by expatiating under its star-bespangled canopy from pole to pole? what frequency of observation can forbid the heart to swell in concert with the swellings of the mighty ocean? and if these and such like glorious creatures, instead of sinking, rise upon us from repeated experience, what must our sensations be, when the great Creator himself is the object we consider!—when we lose ourselves in his immensity, incomprehensibility—when we trace the mysterious ways of his providence, explore the exceeding riches of his grace—plung into the overflowing ocean of his love.

The first thing which naturally strikes the mind in considering these words of Christ, is the perpetuity of his existence, in connection with the universality of his presence, "*I am with you* "*alway.*" *I am* is a name which the dread Jehovah challenges with a special propriety as his own—from the flames of the burning yet unconsumed bush. He proclaimed it as that by which he chose to be made known to his ancient church and people—it is expressive of his unli-

mited, unchangeable, independent existence—it implies a glory which God will not, cannot give to another—for a creature of whatever order or dignity to assume it were an act of presumption infinitely greater than for the meanest subject to put on the diadem, and mount the throne: but the blessed God-man, without invading the high prerogative of the Eternal, without robbing God, without advancing an ill-founded claim, assumes this greatest of all titles; with a solemn, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," asserts concerning himself, "Before Abraham "was, *I am*"—he repeats the same claim in the words of the text: he was now about to leave the world, he was on the wing to ascend to his resplendent throne in the heavens, and become thenceforth invisible to the bodily eyes of his disciples; but he assures them for their comfort, that their master's existence was to be no way affected as to its duration by the transition of his bodily presence from one place to another. The expression, "*I am* with you," denotes much more than a promise of frequent visits to his people, as they might need, and he in mercy be inclined to pay him; it intimates an uninterrupted duration, an existence incapable of being suspended, an existence which swallows up the distinctions of past and future, to which the

first and the last day of the world are equally present—before which, time is but a single instant —whose duration is a vast, ever-present eternity. The churches of Asia were formed, flourished, declined, dissolved—that generation of disciples, having fulfilled their day, fell on sleep—another arose and expired; after them, another, and another still, down to this present time—and a rising generation 'presses hard upon the heels of that which is risen, the impatient death hurries us away; but the great head of the church is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; his relation to his church unbroken;—and "*I am* with "you," the same precious unvarying truth at this hour, which it was near two thousand years ago.

Together with the perpetuity of Christ's duration, observe the universality of his presence, as another proof of his divine nature. The christian church was at that time, indeed, a little flock, a very little flock. But it was not long to be contained within the walls of one upper chamber, it was soon to reach from shore to shore, even until all "the kingdoms of the earth" should "become "the kingdom of God and of his Christ," and its sons and daughters innumerable as the pearly drops on the womb of the morning. Every thing

seemed, indeed, at first to obstruct the chosen few in the work which, at his departure, their Lord had assigned them. The prejudices of the Jews, which had resisted his preaching and his miracles, were now exasperated by a consciousness of their own guilt in procuring the death of a just person, and the perseverance of his disciples in maintaining his doctrines and precepts, they considered as a perpetual reproach on their own obstinacy and injustice. The Gentiles listened to them with unconcern. The tales of heavenly messengers, and the descent of gods upon earth, had become familiar to them; the vulgar were now only amused by the accounts of the miracles of Jesus, while the learned looked upon them with contempt. Both Jews and Gentiles were shocked at hearing their favourite vices and opinions reprobated in the strongest language. Human wisdom heard with scorn the call to lay aside its pride, and throw itself on the knowledge of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, as its only refuge. Banishment, imprisonment, stripes, and death, were the means employed to repress the insolent admonitions of the fishermen of Judea. But what were these to men who were confident of the support of their almighty Master, who held as a pledge his last words, while they saw him rise in glory to his native

heaven; who were conscious of his immediate presence, of his being always with them in all their wanderings and sufferings? When death seemed to hover around every step they made; when fear drew them together into an assembly, which yet, from its small numbers, could not resist the weakest human force; when their hearts almost sunk under their hardships—the Holy Ghost descended, and the disciples were divinely inspired: in this manner, then, did the blessed Jesus at first demonstrate his presence with his people, and in this manner did he for some time continue with them. They were endued with miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; they "spake "with new tongues, they prophesied, they cast "out devils, they took up serpents without re-"ceiving harm, they laid their hands upon the "sick and they recovered, they raised the dead!" In the name, and by the power of Jesus of Nazareth they performed all these wonders; by these they proved and propagated the doctrine of the gospel, the Lord giving testimony to the word of his grace, and "granting signs and wonders "to be done by their hands." But this was a mode of Christ's presence, suited only to a particular time and state of his church, and therefore continued no longer than the cause which

rendered it necessary. His Spirit, in his miraculous power, remained in the world, till the divine mission of the Apostles was fully confirmed, the truth of the gospel completely authenticated, the predictions concerning the latter days delivered, and the canon of scripture perfected.—The world was presented with that evidence, and this unerring, unalterable standard, and then the miraculous interposition of the Saviour ceased. From that time to this, and hence to the end of time, he maintains the interests of his kingdom, and manifests his presence, by the ordinary, but not less effectual, means of his grace, the ministration of the word, and the dispensation of the sacraments.—And

1st. Our Lord Jesus Christ, according as he said, manifests his presence among his people, in and by the ministration of the word. He himself is emphatically called "*the word*," and "*the "word of God*," because he is the great subject of divine revelation: the principal and uniform object pointed at by every historical narration, by every moral and ceremonial institution, by every prophetical enunciation. "Search the scriptures," said he to the Jews, "for in them ye think ye have "eternal life, and they are they which testify of

"me." And he adds particularly, concerning one capital part of scripture; "had ye believed Moses, "ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." His word then being one with himself, they are with great propriety indiscriminately put, the one for the other—to preach, to hear, to believe, to obey the word, is to preach, hear, believe, and obey Christ himself. Were this duly considered, my brethren, surely both ministers and their people would take more diligent heed how they speak, and how they hear—surely the persuasion of Christ's presence would fill us with more zeal, and reverence, and attention, and anxiety, when we meet together in his name, in his house of prayer, sit at his feet, and learn the law from his mouth. Were this duly considered, surely too, our Bibles would be more frequent, more instructive, and more pleasing companions in our closets, and in our families; and it would be our delight to shut out every intruder, that we might often enjoy the highest and happiest of all fellowship, with our heavenly divine Master, our compassionate, condescending elder brother, who courts our friendship, for our good alone.

2dly. Christ is present in his church in the administration of the sacraments of the New

Testament, baptism and the supper of the Lord. Both these institutions point directly at Christ, or rather bring him close to the eye of our faith; in them he condescends to assist and strengthen the spiritual sense, by natural and material objects: in the one, the purifying virtue of his blood and Spirit, and the personal holiness which becomes all his members, are represented by the simple but significant element of water; in the other, the atonement made for sin by the sacrifice which he offered up of himself upon the cross, is presented to the believer under the equally significant elements of bread and wine. In the words of the original institution, Christ speaks of these as one with himself; "This is "my body broken for you;"—"this is my blood, "shed for the remission of your sins."—Not that our blessed Lord hereby intended a real corporal presence, an idea which has filled the world with so much absurdity, confusion, and blood—No, though the means employed address themselves primarily to our senses, they speak through them to the mind, they appeal to reason and faith; they do not pretend to bring Christ down from heaven, but to raise the soul from earth to heaven. This is observed to prevent a superstitious use of the elements, to shew the station which the bodily organs possess in divine things,

and to lead men, in looking for the Saviour, and in the enjoyment of his presence, to employ not their corporeal but their mental powers; or the former, at most, as servants to the latter.

It is proper that you now proceed to what is your more immediate duty; from which I shall detain you only till I have, from what has been said, suggested a very few things, which may, through the blessing of God, assist you in the right performance of it.

1st. As Christ has promised his perpetual presence as a blessing and support to his church, let every one endeavour habitually to realize that presence to himself. Its use and importance are obvious to the slightest observation. Surely, christian, you would wish that religion were in a more thriving and vigorous state in your soul, that duty were performed with greater alacrity and steadiness, that temptation were resisted with more fortitude, that trials were borne with more patience, humility, and resignation—that sin were more subdued, and holiness more advanced; that the world were more subjected, and heaven more desired. As you indeed would obtain all this, take Christ with you wherever

you go, and in whatever you do;—before his presence, behold the rugged path of duty become smooth, "Satan as lightning falls from heaven," adversity changes its aspect, the bonds of sin are loosed, the glory of the world fades, the gates of the holy city unfold themselves! Seek him, then, who is willing to be found of you, walk with him who will not leave you without reluctance; count his presence your greatest honour, happiness, and security; seek to live with him on earth, whose love constitutes the glory of angels and the happiness of heaven.

2dly. Under apparent neglect and desertion, rely on his faithful word of promise. He is not always at a distance when he seems to be so; and then it is only "in a little wrath for a mo-"ment; but with great mercies" will he "gather "his Israel, and with everlasting kindness" will he "have mercy on them." Does a dark providence veil his face? wait with patience; the cloud will, ere long, disperse, and the sun break through; and though a copious shower of sorrow may have fallen, it will only fertilize the soil and quicken the growth. Does a whole host of intervening foes strive to keep thee at a distance from him, and block up every passage? to thee,

indeed, it may be as a seven-fold wall of iron and brass, but it shall not be able to abide before him; thou hast but to stand still and see the salvation of God, to see every enemy flying before him. Has he not said, and he cannot lie, "fear not, I am with thee, be not dis-"mayed, for I am thy God?"—"When thou "passeth through the waters, I will be with "thee, and through the rivers, they shall not "overflow thee: when thou walkest through "the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall "the flames kindle upon thee." Therefore, O my soul, "though I walk through the valley "of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

3dly. Keep always in mind, that in this world the christian lives by faith and not by sight, and therefore rest satisfied with your present mode of life, and carefully employ those faculties which are at present bestowed, and suited to your existence as a christian upon earth. Apply the ear and the eye of faith to the word, to the sacraments, that you may hear and see Jesus the Lord through that medium. The time will come, when you shall see him "face to "face." In heaven you shall behold the unveiled face of your Redeemer, stand for ever in his presence, be filled with his love, sing his praise.

In this blessed hope, "fight the good fight," hold on your course, endure hardship, resist temptation, perform duty. The day of your redemption draweth nigh—he who testifieth these things, saith, "Surely, I come quickly.—Amen, even so "come, Lord Jesus."

SERMON XV.

ACTS vii. 55.

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

FOR THE EVENING OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON THE FAITH OF ST. STEPHEN.

YOU were this day, christians, with Mary, the beloved disciple, and the rest, standing by the cross of Jesus, to contemplate the most affecting sight which the sun ever beheld—the Son of God, expiring under the bitterest agony of body and soul. God himself has told us the amazing effect which this had upon inanimate creation: "The vail of the temple was rent in "twain, the graves were opened, the rocks cleft "asunder, the earth did quake, the sun was "darkened." What effect it has had upon your minds, God and your own hearts know—if it has produced, in any degree, love and gratitude to the

illustrious sufferer, lowly thoughts of yourselves, and hatred of sin, your eyes will now turn with delight to the ravishing sight presented to them in the text: the heavens opened, the divine glory displayed, and "Jesus standing on the right "hand of God, for the suffering of death "crowned with glory and honour." How do all other of the splendid sights which have been exhibited since the birth of the universe, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the "Sons of God shouted for joy," shrink and fade before this most excellent glory! Solomon, in his glory, surrounded with the myriads of Israel, dedicating the stately pile upon mount Zion, unto the most high God, was, doubtless, a very magnificent spectacle! Beautiful the prospect of the land flowing with milk and honey, which Moses enjoyed from the top of Pisgah: transcendently delicious the happy garden which God's own hand planted for the prince and father of the human race, while as yet sin and the curse had not entered into the creature: but behold a greater than Adam, a greater than Moses, a greater than Solomon, is here.—Behold the lofty temple at Jerusalem, and the fertile plains of Canaan, and the delights of an earthly paradise, infinitely excelled—a temple, which is not dedicated unto, but which is, "the Lord God Almighty and the

"Lamb:" a land into which sin and the curse shall never enter, a garden planted and watered with none but the tree and water of life. Such was the sight which the blessed Stephen beheld, whether with the purified, strengthened eye of the body, or the more piercing, penetrating eye of faith, "we cannot tell, God knoweth;" and such is the glorious sight to which, in the close of a communion sabbath, we would invite your attention, that "ye also believing may rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." That such a subject and such a service may not prove a weariness to your bodies or your minds, I shall shortly present to your notice some of the more striking circumstances of the scene before us, and then apply them to your present and ensuing stations in the christian life.

1st. Observe this illustrious person's distinguishing character:—"he was a man full of faith, and "of the Holy Ghost"—faith his grand principle, a principle not learned from the wisdom of man, but wrought in the heart by God's own Spirit.—How empty all the other distinctions which men enjoy compared to this! how worthless a title, a man of rank, a man of wealth, a man of learning, a man of renown, how unavailing, and often how dangerous to the possessor!

Take to yourselves, ye children of this world, take all its dignities, and riches, and wisdom, and fame; give me, O heavenly Father, what "the "world can neither give nor take away;" give me with this thy servant, to be "filled with faith "and with the Holy Ghost."—He had, doubtless, "known Christ after the flesh," heard the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, witnessed his miracles, his sufferings, his ascension; but now he knows the Saviour by virtue of a higher principle than sense, by that principle which is "the substance of things hoped for, "and the evidence of things not seen," by Christ dwelling in the heart.—Is it any wonder that, in the eyes of the beholders, his face was as it had been the face of an angel, when the divine glory irradiated every faculty of his soul, animated every limb and feature, and inspired every word; when the choicest of God's gifts, the very essence of Christ's purchase, the spirit of faith, was not only imparted, but imparted in a large, an overflowing measure? Wonder not, however, O christian, as if some singular and strange blessing were conferred upon this holy man. No, the same exalted character, the same distinguished honour, do all the saints enjoy. The good things of this world, God gives to some, and withholds or withdraws from others according

to his sovereign will, but the blessings of faith and the Holy Spirit are neither withheld nor withdrawn from any of his children; nay, these very gifts evidence, as well as constitute their sonship. In God, we never can discern any thing of Jacob's partial affection, which must needs dress its Joseph only in a coat of many colours: no, all his sons have one common spirit, one common garb, one common fare—the babe that was born of the Spirit yesterday, and the martyr who died a thousand years ago; the christian who crept forth this morning from his scanty clay-built cottage, and the christian who is by and by to repose upon down. Increase then, O Lord, increase my faith; "let "me be filled with the Spirit"—thy other gifts take or give even as thou wilt.—Notice in the

2nd Place, in what manner these inward divine principles, expressed and exerted themselves; they constrained their possessor to do his master's work.—Stephen, "full of faith and "power," did great wonders and miracles among the people, confuted unbelieving opponents, who "were not able to resist the spirit and wisdom "by which he spake," declared the truth of God

with warmth and intrepidity before partial, prejudiced judges, and an ill-informed exasperated multitude.—What an active, fearless, resistless principle do we here behold in action: "a talent" not "laid up in a napkin," but laid out to high advantage; a candle, not "hid under a "bushel," but placed "on a candlestick," and shedding abroad its light. Behold here an amiable follower of him whose "meat and drink it was "to do his Father's will; who taught as one "having authority; who before Pontius Pilate "witnessed a good confession; whom even the "winds and the seas obeyed." Behold here, O christian, as in a glass, how thy faith must operate, and how, if it be that faith which God's Holy Spirit teaches, it will of necessity operate. You have this day been employed in a service which the men of the world regard with scorn, and devils with rage and hatred; and if its influence is visible in your future lives, that rage will be blown up to a fiercer flame; but "in "your patience, possess ye your souls, stand fast "in the faith, there shall not a hair from your "head fall to the ground."—This prince of martyrs was now in circumstances very similar to those in which his great Master had lately been placed, and from him he draws firmness and per-

severance; for while his tongue is employed in declaring "the truth as it is in Jesus," his eyes are fixed upon Jesus, which is the

Third observable circumstance in this instructive scene.—What a striking contrast have we here! Let imagination for a moment do its work. See that horrid group of infernal furies, with hearts set on fire by a torch from hell, with looks distorted through inward anguish, eyes sparkling with indignation and revenge, and teeth grinding one against another in torment, inferior only to that which the totally damned endure, suspending for a moment the execution of their rage, till it gathered more fierceness.—Behold, in the midst, the devoted victim of their wrath—with the face and mien of an angel; his heart overflowing with love to God, and with pity to perishing souls—with arms extended, and eyes lifted up, taking more than a Pisgah view of the heavenly Canaan—with looks full of sweet composure, that bespeak a saint already in bliss, feet that spurn this mole-hill earth, and lips opening to begin "the song of Moses and "the Lamb."—O blessed Jesus! What a glorious creature is a christian! for he is like thee.—Had sense prevailed, we should have seen Stephen looking around with terror and astonishment,

and contriving if by any means he might make his escape from the present danger—but he conversed not with flesh and blood, he had learned from his heavenly teacher "not to fear him "who can kill the body, but after that has no "more that he can do," and remembered his saying; "he that loveth his life shall lose it, and "he that for my sake hateth his life in this world, "shall keep it unto life eternal." The man whose "conversation is in heaven," has neither eyes nor ears for this world—for its choicest prospects and most melodious sounds are to the spiritual sense, deformity and discord—and "this "is the victory which overcometh the world," and death, and the devil, and all things, "even "our faith;" by this the christian "endures, as "seeing him who is invisible," and this is its constant uniform direction, as the needle toward the pole, it looks up stedfastly into heaven.—Which leads to a

Fourth and most remarkable circumstance; namely, the transcendently glorious objects presented to the believing eye: "the glory of "God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of "God."—The whole gospel is here, as it were, collected into a single point, but a point which blazes out in brightness ineffable—behold the

great work of redemption, and the great author of it; the ever-adorable Deity in three persons, harmonizing his divine perfections, with the lost creature's salvation. Stephen, "full of "the Holy Ghost," beholds, with the appropriating eye of faith, "the glory of God, and Jesus "standing on the right of God"—in other words, God come into the heart, discovers God in the glory of his grace and love, reconciled, well-pleased, through God, mediator, and intercessor, and the gates of heaven, of consequence, opened to the believer.—How do these blessed objects of Stephen's vision reflect one another—would we behold the glory of God, it is to be seen in meridian splendour in the face of Christ Jesus, the humble, despised Galilean, but who "is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the "express image of his person." On the other hand, would we know Christ Jesus the Lord, let us look within the veil, toward the eternal throne, where the infinite perfection of wisdom, power, and goodness sits in majesty—and there we behold that wonderful person who "died for "our sins, rose again for our justification, and "lives for evermore to make continual intercession for us."—And in what an endearing attitude is the Saviour here exhibited! Elsewhere

he is represented, as sitting at the right hand of God, to denote his having taken possession of his heavenly kingdom, and become the sovereign administrator of all things; but here, he is represented as standing at the Father's right hand, to denote the earnestness and ardor of intercession, particularly at those seasons when his servants are in circumstances of peculiar danger and distress.—I see now, O Stephen, the source of thy composure and intrepidity; and therefore I wonder no longer; they are not thine own, but given thee.—Thy face shines with rays borrowed from the light of thy Redeemer's countenance; thou art "strong in the grace "that is in Christ Jesus," and thus strengthened, thus supported, the meanest of God's saints is conqueror, and more than conqueror, over all the hostile powers of earth and hell.—After looking at this bright part of the prospect, every thing else must be dim and uninteresting.—Let us, therefore, pause here, and look homewards, and consider to what purposes all this is to be applied. —And in the

First place, let this day's service, and the glorious object we have now been contemplating, be applied as an incitement to the diligent and cheer-

ful performance of every christian duty.—Consider, I pray you, O communicant, in what a majestic presence you stand every moment—your eyes, alas, are frequently shut, and no less frequently diverted to very inferior objects; but the eyes of him with whom you have to do, cannot cease to behold you so much as for a single instant; let the motion of his eye then regulate yours.—Consider what things God regards with pleasure, and what, with disgust; and be assured that can never be good for you to behold with complacence, which God turns from with aversion.—God is not to be looked for only in heaven, and therefore, those exercises which lead our thoughts immediately thither, are not the only ones in which we ought to realize his presence—that presence fills earth as well as heaven, and therefore it is to be revered in the most ordinary concerns of life.—And if the Holy Ghost is indeed in the heart, and faith in its proper exercise, then an ordinary meal will be eaten to the glory of God, as the Lord's Supper is, and your own houses, temples holy unto the Lord, as those more directly consecrated to his service; and the practice of your daily, however mean employment, will in that case become a religious service. Instead, therefore, of a long and particular detail of the christian duties, and

the several motives to the performance of them; let me direct you, in one word, to point your eye stedfastly toward God.—And this consideration applies equally to abstaining from sin, and performing of duty—and this consideration, properly felt, will unquestionably set both sin and duty in very new and striking lights, and at one blow cut off all that idle casuistry which men so ingeniously employ to protect beloved lusts, and excuse themselves from unpleasant duties.—I will not, therefore, at present, caution my hearers against this or that dubious or improper piece of conduct, but beseech them, and also address the word of exhortation to my own heart, upon every occasion, to look at holy Stephen, and with him, to "the "glory of God, and Jesus standing upon the "right hand of God."—In the

Second place, let this subject be applied, as a support and consolation under every distress—and as a directory in the right use of enjoyments, mercies, and deliverances. When the eye is toward God, and every thing is considered as coming immediately from his hand, then every thing wears a pleasant aspect.—Prosperity acquires a new and heightened relish, and adversity loses its sting—on the contrary, remove God from the creature, and instantly all is converted into

gloom. Distress wears a sevenfold horror, and the gayest scene in life is but as the sullenness of evening twilight, a faint, cheerless glimmering, thickening into night.—Alas, little do the mere men of this world imagine what a rich relish they want to all their pleasures;—they see nothing of God in them, and therefore it is no wonder that they are heard so frequently complaining of their insipidity—while the christian, who considers his dry morsel and his dinner of herbs as the gift of his heavenly Father, enjoys a double feast, food for his body, a cordial for his mind. In this view, every thing is equally good to the believer: not that prosperity and adversity are the same thing in themselves, or that the believer is insensible to the pleasure of the one, and the pain of the other; no, but he sees the same God in both, and it is the presence and absence of God, which make heaven and hell—he has learned to reverse the Israelites' request to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; "but let not God speak with us, lest we die." His desire is, let God speak to me, though it be in the voice of thunder; let me be but sensible that it is his voice, and I shall not die, but live. Should then the very worst of all calamities overtake thee, the apprehension, and the well-ground-

ed apprehension, of the divine displeasure, here you find refuge and safety. Of this we have a most encouraging and instructive example in the history of the prophet Jonah: "Then Jonah "prayed unto the Lord his God, out of the fish's "belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine "affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out "of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest "my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the "deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods "compassed me about: all thy billows and thy "waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast "out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward "thy holy temple. The waters compassed me "about, even to the soul: the depth closed me "about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; "the earth with her bars was about me for "ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from "corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul "fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: "and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine "holy temple. They that observe lying vani-"ties forsake their own mercy. But I will sacri-"fice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; "I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is "of the Lord. And the Lord spake unto the

"fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry "land *." And if a believing view of Christ at the right hand of God is a refuge from the wrath of God himself, how much more from all the impotent rage of earth and hell!—The christian's motto is, I fear God, and I know no other fear.—And if this be the case, alas, my brethren, how little do the spirit and power of christianity prevail in the world. Are the judgments of God denounced? all is coolness and unconcern, while the displeasure of the most insignificant of our fellow creatures fills us with anxiety. Is a finger of our body, or an iota of our worldly estate out of order? sleep flies from our eye-lids, yet our souls may be sick to death, and our interest in the heavenly inheritance very insecure, and we lie down in peace. —A trifling alarm of they do not know what, of something or nothing, shall, in a moment, rouse and terrify that very assembly, which, immediately before, listened to the heaven-taught doctrines of the wrath of God, revealed and to be revealed against unregenerate sinners, and the terrors of a judgment to come, without a sigh—as if the apprehension or uncertain rumour of fire in the city, were a more affecting matter than "the fire which the breath of the Lord

* Jonah ii.

" as a stream of brimstone doth kindle." O, my brethren, how little, how very little, has God of our eyes or our hearts, of our fear or of our love.—In the

Third place, this subject may be applied, as an excellent preparative for death.—That event, my brethren, which cannot be far off from every one of us, must bring us into the immediate sensible presence of God; let this veil of flesh once be dropt, and the disembodied spirit must see and feel God every instant of its existence. The great secret of the spiritual life then is, to cultivate that kind of union with God, which death, the dissolver of the body, cannot affect; it is to have the spiritual sense prevailing over, and regulating the body.—Men's death has generally some degree of resemblance to their life; what an awful affecting blank then, to suppose it no worse, must that person's dying hour be, whose life was a course of superficial, occasional regard, or total disregard of God!—What a constrained, unpleasant, unblessed state, supposing positive punishment out of the question, eternity passed in a presence which was never courted, never studied, never delighted in; on the other hand, when the life is an habitual repetition of Stephen's and of Christ's own dying words, " Lord Jesus

"receive my spirit,"—"Father, into thy hands I "commend my spirit," then death can hardly make any change at all—it only brings the soul somewhat nearer to that God, whose presence had already become its life, and glory, and joy. But the christian's only sure defence against the king of terrors, is the sight of Christ "on the "right hand of the majesty on high;" for what is the plain and audible voice of that sight? "Fear "not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called "thee by thy name, thou art mine: when thou "passest through the waters, I will be with "thee; and through the rivers, they shall not "overflow thee: when thou walkest through the "fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the "flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with "thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God*." It says that death is a disarmed, vanquished, harmless, stingless foe—from that most excellent glory, Christ speaks to the ear as well as the eye, and what are his words? "Fear not, I am the "First and the Last; I am he that liveth, and was "dead, and behold I am alive for evermore."—"Whether then we live, we live unto the Lord; "and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: "whether we live therefore or die, we are the

* Isaiah xli. 10.

" Lord's: for to this end Christ both died, and " rose and revived, that he might be Lord both " of the dead and living."—In the

Fourth and last place, let me entreat you, to apply what you have seen and heard, as a most affecting argument to the exercise of brotherly love, that distinguishing badge of Christ's disciples.—Every thing here conspires to press this upon us in a very particular manner—an union in duty, in privilege, in interest. The same hopes, the same fears, common friends, common enemies, or, in the expressive words of the Holy Ghost himself, " one body, one spirit, even as ye " are called in one hope of your calling. One " Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God, and " Father of all, who is above all, and through " all, and in you all *." When Christ interceded in behalf of his disciples while on earth, this was one of his petitions: " Holy Father, keep " through thine own name those whom thou hast " given me, that they may be one, as we are." And he is ever uniform in his prayers and in his commands—from his glorious exaltation he reiterates the new commandment which he issued in the days of his humiliation, and assigns the

* Eph. iv. 4, 6.

same reason for it. "A new commandment I "give unto you, that ye love one another; as I "have loved you, that ye also love one another: "by this shall all men know that ye are my dis- "ciples, if ye have love one to another." What, christians, shall the most worthless of mankind, from the very vilest of motives, prove faithful and affectionate one to another; and shall not the most exalted and cogent motives produce that effect among the children of the same heavenly Father, who eat at one table, and are travelling together to the same heavenly country?—Bring then, I beseech you, your thoughts and words, and conduct toward your fellow disciples, frequently to this test; can he who beholds me from his throne at the Father's right hand, who died and pleads both for me and my brother; can he approve of this envious, or malicious, or contemptuous sentiment, or harsh expression, or unkind action? Has not he said, "in as much as "ye did it, or did it not, to one of the least of "these my brethren, it was done, or not done "unto me?"—Knowest thou not, O man, that of the three great christian graces, "faith, hope, and "charity, the greatest is charity"—that it shall remain, when the others are come to an end; that while they are suited only to an imperfect

state upon earth, it constitutes the glory and felicity both of earth and heaven?

Before I conclude, compassion for a set of hearers very different from those I meant hitherto to address, constrains me to say a few words to them.—Unhappy souls, will you consider for a moment, what it is to have Christ at the right hand of God, ready to fill his mouth with arguments not for, but against you?—Should thy soul this night be required of thee, and where is thy security that it will not? the whole of Christ's process as Redeemer of lost mankind, his incarnation, his life, his doctrine, his bloody agony, his accursed death, his resurrection, ascension, intercession, spirit—his patience and forbearance, must all, with a thousand tongues, plead for thy eternal condemnation. Could the veil be drawn aside from an invisible world, so that you could discern the unalterable condition of the impenitent sinner who died yesterday, and who, but a few days or weeks ago, was in no worse a condition than you are at this moment, you would then discover on what an awful precipice you stand, what "a fearful thing "it is to fall into the hands of the living God," after having obstinately slighted "the grace that

" is in Christ Jesus."—" Who can dwell, with " devouring fire ; who can dwell with everlasting " burnings ?"—I would intreat you then, as you cannot see into a world of spirits, until thou art thyself a spirit, when fear and hope are no more, but all is awful reality—I would intreat you to open your eyes, and view that tremendous state, as it stands in the most striking demonstration in the book of God.—Yet you may behold God's face in mercy, and Christ at his right hand, as your advocate and intercessor ; yet you may partake in the benefits of that precious blood, upon which you have hitherto poured contempt, but which is able to wash away the guilt even of that crimson-coloured sin—yet you may cry for, and receive God's holy Spirit. I can safely assure you of this to-night, but of your continuance in a land of hope till to-morrow, I can give you no assurance.—The short and uncertain space of human life is the only season allotted for working out your salvation—beyond, is the completion of that salvation, or the everlasting loss of it. O then, " kiss the Son, lest " he be angry, and ye perish from the way ; when " his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are " all they that put their trust in him *." God make us all wise unto salvation. Amen.

* Psalm ii. 12.

SERMON XVI.

REVELATIONS xxii. 20.

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

FOR THE EVENING OF A COMMUNION-SABBATH.

THE BELIEVER WISHING FOR THE COMING OF JESUS.

THESE are the concluding words of the book of God—the winding up of "the great mystery of "godliness."—And O, my brethren, how happy is that christian, who can cordially join in them: who can indeed look forward to the Lord's second coming with earnest expectation and holy joy.—In what part of this assembly shall I look for those happy, happy souls, who have so nearly reached the portal of heaven: who are thus, on joyful wing, flying into the harbour of eternal rest?—Wherever ye sit, my beloved, my heavenly friends, though in the lowest room of this clay-built temple, ye sit enthroned far above the pomp and splendor of kings.—

Worldly pomp! worldly states! worldly thrones! What are ye, but empty, delusive names.—Ye kings and princes of the earth, hide, hide, your diminished heads, eclipsed in the dazzling rays of that humble, silent, obscure follower of Jesus. "For his life is hid with Christ in God, and when "Christ his life shall appear, then shall he also "appear with him in glory."

Celestial spirits! in what language shall a frail worm of earth address you, deep-skilled in the language of paradise?—Lend, O lend a little of your heavenly art, to touch the inmost soul of your less happy, less favoured fellow worshippers, to rouse them to a holy emulation of your faith, and patience of hope, and ardour of desire—attending angels, guardians of the heirs of glory, lend, lend, your sacred rapture, to wing our drooping souls to heaven. And chiefly thou, O

"————Spirit, my voice inspire,
"Who touch'd Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire;
"That thus divinely taught, from soul to soul
"The strains of op'ning heaven may sweetly roll."

Blessed Jesus! the delightful sound still thrills in my ear; "as often as ye eat this bread, and "drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till "he come." O to have stepped this day from

thy table, the emblem of thy presence, to thy seen, felt, enjoyed presence: O that my pilgrimage might have ended with this day's labour of love, that I might have been found by my Lord employed in his own dearest service! But peace, my prescribing soul, he knows best; suffice it thee to know, that "yet a little while, and he "that cometh, will come, and will not tarry;" and that whenever this shall be, by his grace thou art prepared for it.

Suffer me, my dear friends, to conclude this solemn service, by taking a short survey of the frame of your hearts, who can thus, in the words of the text, express your joyful acquiescence in the intimation of your Lord's speedy and certain appearance—and that, not so much for the increase of your comfort and joy, for that is well nigh full, as for the direction, the encouragement, and confirmation of those who are yet "in "heaviness through manifold temptations."

First then, these words, "Come, Lord Jesus," are expressive of a confirmed and lively faith, fully assured of, and resting upon, the event.—The believer, as it were, takes Christ at his word, and claims the accomplishment of his promise, not as if he doubted his veracity, or his

power, but because it is a matter of such mighty import to him that his soul flies to it as his great, his eternal all, his only place of rest.—O what a different aspect does this event wear from what it once did! a great deal of the christian's happiness arises from comparing his present with his former self.—Once, says he, the Lord's coming to judgment I regarded with a listless insensibility—as a matter in which I had no very great concern, if indeed it was true; well do I remember when, although I did not wholly disbelieve it, it made no more impression on my mind, than if I had been assured it was absolutely false; and after that it pleased God to rouse me out of a carnally secure state, my awakened conscience looked forward to the day of the Lord with terror and astonishment.—Then I would have given thousands of worlds, had I been possessed of them, to be but assured that there was no such thing; that I was to sleep for ever in the dust—that death was to put an end to my existence. But now, that God has graciously imparted to me of this precious faith—the coming of my Lord is my chief, my only joy and comfort, and myriads of worlds should in vain attempt to buy me from the blessed and glorious hope of it, now "I know that my Redeemer "liveth." This "faith, the substance of things

"hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," calls Jesus the Lord its own, calls the whole of his purchase its own, calls eternity its own, and reaches forward to the happy period, when time shall be lost and swallowed up in eternity, when the Saviour shall come to change faith into the perfect vision of God, and hope into complete enjoyment. As the imprisoned debtor, waits the arrival of his affectionate, constant friend, who has already purchased his release, to usher him into liberty—as the anxious mother, or fond wife, looks with impatient ardour from the window, while the vessel which carries the long-expected son or husband is entering the port—If we could suppose these wholly exempted from apprehension and mistrust, which in human things can never be the case, we should then be able to form some idea of the believer's happy state, when with a confirmed faith he expresses himself in the language of the text, "Amen. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The temper which dictates these words, is, I am sure, a temper greatly raised above this world; "and this is the victory that overcometh the "world, even our faith." The believer who has attained this happy frame, will neither be much elevated with its smiles, nor much dejected with

its frowns: he considers it merely as a passage to Emmanuel's land, as a road that he must needs travel before he can reach home, which sometimes indeed may present a beautiful landscape, and at other times a barren heath, producing alternately a kind of momentary pleasure and disgust, which are equally swallowed up in the desire of being at his journey's end, of being with those he loves, and with whom he is to abide for ever. And if at any time he is detained for a little by the way, during the rage of the tempest, or to taste a small refreshment, it is accounted as time lost, and happiness deferred, for "his desire is to "depart and be with Christ." Thou canst remember the time when the world was enthroned in thy heart—when pleasure courted, and seldom courted in vain—when ambition inflamed, and pride swelled the soul—when gain was thy god, and poverty the only frightful demon—when heaven was a thing of nought, and eternal splendors attracted not the eye: but now thou sittest amidst the stars, and the world is dwindled down to a speck; now its muddy pleasures are as gall and wormwood to thy taste—now its honours are discerned to be lighter than vanity; and what was once thy pride is now thy shame; now "poverty and the reproach of Christ" are

esteemed greater riches than the gems of India, the perfumes of Arabia, or the treasures of both eastern or western worlds; for thou beholdest the whole world as a huge wreck set apart for destruction; thou beholdest the stores of fire already prepared, the train laid, and the almighty arm lifted up and ready to apply the flaming match, whose sudden touch shall set creation in a blaze, melt down the elements, devour the sun in its hotter flame, and reduce the heaven and the earth to ashes: whilst thou, like an enlarged prisoner at a secure distance, rejoicest in beholding the ruin of thy dungeon—whilst thou, "caught up in the clouds to meet thy Lord in "the air," far, far beyond the fury of the conflagration, lookest forward to the "new heavens "and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righte-"ousness;" where a polluted and polluting world shall defile, and destruction shall waste no more. Why, ye deluded children of this world, will "ye spend money for that which is not bread; "and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" wherefore will you set your hearts on that which is not, and, shutting your eyes, stumble in the brightness of day? Behold the man startled out of sleep at midnight, with the dreadful cry, the house, the house is on fire, make haste, escape for

thy life!—behold him, the distracted spectator of his own ruin—chased out by the merciless flames, and no shelter opening its arms to receive him —and in that, behold the faint semblance of thine own future dismal fate. What shall become of thee, O worldling, when this earthly ball shall be but as one of the sparks which flieth upwards, when universal nature shall be reduced to a wreck? How contemptible, how mournful a spectacle will houses and lands, and treasures then afford, when all these things shall be dissolved, when "the Lord cometh in the clouds of heaven, with "power and great glory!"

"Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." These words in the third place, bespeak a hatred of sin. I hear the believer say, sin is now my only grief, my only burden; it is deliverance from the inclination to, and the power of sinning, that brightens the prospect of my Lord's approach. Alas, O my soul! I too well remember when I "rolled sin as a sweet morsel "under my tongue," when my reason and conscience, as well as my senses, lay drenched in its intoxicating, its poisonous streams; when I fondly flattered myself I was happy and well, while I was miserable and sick unto death.—Alas! time was, when I vainly endeavoured to reconcile

the more enlightened principles of my nature to what my carnal heart loved; when I was at pains to contrive soft, smooth names for what my unruly passions craved, and after I had shut my own eyes, said with the fool, "how doth God know? and is "there knowledge in the Most High?" Time was when I was "a lover of pleasure, more than "of God;" and even still, after I have "tasted "of the heavenly gift, and been made partaker "of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good "word of God, and the powers of the world to "come," even now when I know what communion with God is, sin will insinuate itself, and betray me to my sorrow and my shame—and have I not then reason to cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus, "come quickly!" come to save me from these cunning serpents, these ravening wolves, these devouring dragons!—Thus I stand as on the extremity of a barren rock in the midst of the troubled ocean, surrounded with dens of lions and the mountains of the leopards; and, lo, he comes, the Saviour comes! the hoary deep grows smooth before him, the breath of love swells his sails, and my deliverance draweth nigh; he comes to waft me from this frightful desert, where sin abounds, and misery, of consequence, where I have been so long uncomfortably confined, to those blissful shores, where pure and immortal

pleasures for ever reign; where sin shall tempt, and I shall yield no more!

Farther, in the fourth place, the temper expressed in these words, argues superiority to the fear of death. They represent the follower of the Lamb, in the last, the closing scene of life; and there, my brethren, behold true fortitude, true heroism, without any mixture of stoical affected insensibility.—May we not suppose him at that awful hour thus more at large pouring out his heart into his Saviour's bosom?—Now, blessed Jesus, and never till now, did I know what a precious treasure thy love is—how does it smooth the brow of care, blunt the edge of pain, relieve the languor of sickness, and throw a ray of light from end to end of the dark valley!—O, what had been my situation this day, deprived of it—when nature is under a pressure so heavy, and a journey of such interesting import before me?—What, O what were death without thee? Eternal thanks to thy matchless grace, I have that within me, which the king of terrors, who is soon to strip me of every thing else, cannot take away, my own conscious mind, conscious of thy love—thy Holy Spirit, bearing witness with my spirit, that I am "a child of God, an heir of God, and

" joint-heir with Christ."—Come then, to put me in full possession of my inheritance; come, and set thy " prisoner of hope" for ever free; knock off these fetters wherewith I am held, relieve me from this lump of clay, which weighs down my immortal spirit.—Now I have got a satisfying answer to that question which once perplexed and distressed me to such a degree:—" O, wretch-" ed man that I am, who shall deliver me from " the body of this death?" Death shall do it; death, the keen instrument in my Saviour's skilful hand, shall cut off the rotten member, and remove the disease: " though I walk through " the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear " no evil; thou art with me, thy rod and thy " staff they comfort me. Surely goodness and " mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; " and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for " ever."—" My flesh also shall rest in hope," for thou wilt rear up again this clay tabernacle, and from " a vile body, change it into the similitude " of thy glorious body."—" Come, Lord Jesus," and burst asunder the bars of my grave, gather together my scattered dust, purify it from its dross, fit it for immortality, and erect it into a spiritual building, suited to the glorified nature of its spiritual inhabitant. " O death, where is

" thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Why did I tremble—whereat was I afraid? a phantom, a mere shadow: behold the contest draws to a close, the struggle is over, and I am victorious.—" Thanks be to God who giveth me the victory" —adored be the almighty arm of my all-victorious Redeemer, which struck the decisive blow, that Redeemer now comes triumphant to impart unto my soul the eternal fruits of his conquest. " Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." Along with this observe,

In the fifth place, what ardour of love to the Redeemer is expressed in these words?—" Love, " strong as death, which many waters cannot " quench, neither can the floods drown it."—It is the nature of this passion to hasten to the possession of its object, through the midst of opposition; it overlooks every obstacle, attentive only to its end—mountains sink, and vallies rise before it—winds are hushed, and cease to rage, " deserts smile and blossom as the rose," at its approach. —The history of mankind is little else than a detail of its power and progress —but, O christian, at what an infinite distance are human annals left behind, how does the thing which men call love, shrink into nothing, when the records of heaven are laid open, and the golden

page displayed, where we read the wondrous story of redeeming love.—Love, which reaches from eternity to eternity—love which exhibits the Son of God, before all worlds, forming the gracious plan of mercy and good-will—love which changes the "Ancient of days" into a babe of a day old—"the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," into the form of the servant of servants—the mighty God, the possessor of heaven and of earth, into a poor despised man, "a man of sorrows and acquainted "with grief"—the great lawgiver of the universe, into the appearance of the vilest of criminals —the fountain of life into an expiring malefactor: but which, in all these, bespeaks him "the "chief among ten thousand, and altogether love-"ly:" and if so, how surpassingly amiable, now when he is arrayed in "his own and the Father's "glory"—now when that "visage which was "so marred more than any man, and his "form more than the sons of men," shine forth as "the brightness of God's glory, and the ex-"press image of his person!"—What is it, my brethren, that excites the believer's love to the Saviour?—his glorious excellency, no doubt, but especially his matchless grace and love to the believer. Great and excellent qualities may beget wonder, and reverence, and esteem, but love alone is the genuine parent of love; love

levels all distinctions, assimilating every thing to itself, bringing down heaven to earth, raising earth to heaven: humbling the prince to the dunghill, exalting the beggar to the throne—making the Creator assume the likeness of the creature, conforming and elevating the creature unto God. With what delight, then, does the soul look forward to the blessed day when love shall be perfected—exact conformity and likeness attained—fear and distance for ever done away! Is it any wonder that the world delights not, that sin is hated, and death subdued, when faith thus wings the soul beyond immortality, and realizes the approaching bliss?—I have this day, most adorable Saviour, tasted that thou art gracious; but the few drops of the water of life which I have received, serve only to increase my thirst, and make me desire more earnestly a full draught of the river of pleasure. Sweet, and pure, and refreshing are the streams—O how surpassingly transparent and delicious must the spring be! Welcome to my soul is the season which brings to me the memorials of my Redeemer's love—a thousand and a thousand times welcome the season that brings to me the Redeemer himself: how amiable art thou, Son of God, in thy life, thy humiliation, thy sufferings and death! but thy glorious exaltation dazzles, while

it delights my soul.—"Stately are thy goings, my "King and my God, in thy earthly sanctuary," the kingdom of thy grace; but what thou art in thy heavenly temple, the habitation of thy glory, where I shall see thee as thou art, where thou reignest in visible majesty, the possession with thee of that glory must declare.—"Come, then, "Lord Jesus," and remove the film which darkens my eyes; rend asunder the veil which separates my soul from thee! Come, O my heavenly bridegroom, who hast betrothed me to thyself for ever, and render my union with thee complete —keep me no longer back from the participation of thy kingdom, which is now mine by right, for thou art mine; mine by every dear, every sacred tie, and strong must be the hand which shall separate us any more for ever.

Finally—these words express the language of advanced holiness, panting earnestly after perfection: indeed the love of Christ, and the love of holiness, are one and the same thing, and neither of them is attained in full measure on this side the grave; and this therefore it is that brightens the aspect of death and dispels the horrors of the tomb; this it is that endears heaven, and inspires the christian with a desire to depart. Death dries up for ever the source

of corruption, kills the root of bitterness.—The grave, as a refining pot, wholly purges away the dross, and sends forth nothing but pure gold. The christian has seen with pleasure the old man by little and little pulled down; that crazy ruin, which long tottered over his head, and threatened destruction, levelled with the dust, and, upon its rubbish, a new, a durable, and stately fabric gradually erected, a building of God—even the "new man, which after God is created in right-"eousness and true holiness."—With a holy joy he has observed the progress of this spiritual edifice, and seen it rise under the hands of the great master-builder, daily acquiring new beauty, increasing in majesty and comely proportion, "polished after the similitude of a palace," and a habitation fit for God to dwell in; and now nothing remains but that Jesus himself come and conclude the work, and place the key-stone, and become himself the blessed and everlasting inhabitant. Thou hast discovered to me, most adorable Redeemer, thou hast discovered to me the beauty of holiness in its most attracting loveliest form, even in thy own sacred person; and dim as mine eyes are, it appears to them infinitely amiable and excellent.—Thou hast discovered it to me in the temper and constitution of my own soul,

which by thy grace is in some measure conformed to thy image—but as yet I "see only as through "a glass darkly." There are still many spots in my sun; "come, Lord Jesus," and wash out every stain; come, and pour into my soul the perfection of beauty, that "with open face, beholding "as in a glass the glory of the Lord, I may be "changed into the same image from glory to "glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: Come, "Lord Jesus," and accomplish thine own work, restore me to primeval purity, to what my great progenitor was before his apostacy from thee; make me one with thyself, holy as thou art holy—come, thou chief corner-stone, and put the last hand to thine own holy spiritual temple—come, thou Prince of Peace, and finally establish and settle thy spiritual kingdom; gather together thy willing, holy, happy subjects, and assign to every one his particular station of immortal honour. Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. It is, it is the face of my beloved Lord, my Saviour, my friend; looking forth as the morning, "fair as the moon, "clear as the sun, glistering as an army with "banners."—It is "the voice of my beloved, "saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my

"dove, my undefiled. Behold, I come quickly, "and my reward is with me," eternal life is in my hand, eternal love in my heart—"all "things are now yours, for you are mine. Amen, "even so, come Lord Jesus."

This, my dear brethren, or something like this, is the temper of the desiring, expecting servant of Jesus Christ expressed in the text; and I hope it is the attainment in some measure of many within these walls—that it is a frame and temper truly desirable, I dare say, none will deny—but, alas, great numbers have got into a mischievous way of granting things too readily, for a bare assent to truths, that are uncontroverted and self-evident, they wofully consider as all that is required of them. How many will frankly allow, all that has been said of the happiness of the christian in the view here set before us, who will, notwithstanding, be very little concerned with regard to their own personal possession of it; who will depart from this solemn place and service, as far from the enjoyment or even the desire of that happiness, as when they came hither. But some of you, yes, I know some of you, will go a step farther, will both desire and endeavour to attain it. And

how is that to be done? I can most certainly assure you, that this blessed preparation for a Saviour's coming will never be acquired in the house of mirth and jollity. Forgive me, my brethren, if, upon this very solemn occasion, I give you an affectionate warning of the danger which I think arises to your immortal souls, from that prevailing passion for unprofitable, and, I must say, licentious amusements—give them as soothing, soft epithets as you please, and thus lull conscience fairly asleep, and I doubt not but you may make shift to arrive at last in the paradise of fools, and that is no such pleasant place; but never, never by such means, will you reach the paradise of God. Say, ye sons and daughters of pleasure, is the state of heart which prevails in these scenes of diversion any thing like what we have been speaking of—has it any thing of heaven, any thing of holiness in it?

Great God! that any who call themselves thy worshippers, who profess to be joyful expectants of thy appearance to judgment, and of the chaster sex, should consume the live-long night in the house of folly, till morning blush at the monstrous sight! Is it thus, O foolish daughters, that you consult the interests of your virtue,

your honour, your reputation, of your never dying souls?

But I would not reproach—God knows, I pity you! I pity you, when I think of the poor despicable figure which the fairest and gayest among you would make, were your nocturnal cabal to be broken up by the midnight cry—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to "meet him;" when I think how unready, a head lost in dissipation, and a heart blown up with vanity, are for the reception of the King of glory. Merciful Father! gather not my soul with those who are "lovers of pleasure, more than "lovers of thee."

Would you be prepared for Christ's second appearance, my brethren, be at pains to make yourselves acquainted with him beforehand. He is every day presenting himself to you in the works of his hands—his sun rises day by day to light you to his service, and to measure the distance from eternity, that is diminishing with amazing rapidity. His voice speaks to you sometimes in the soft murmur of the zephyr, now in the roar of the whirlwind, and at other times in the bellowing thunder—his meekness

breathes in the spring, his glory blazes in the summer, his bounty swells in the harvest, and his terrors appall in the winter. Prosperity bespeaks him the indulgent, and adversity the wise parent. This holy communion sabbath reminds us of his death; every sabbath reminds us of his rising again from the dead. This gospel informs us, that Jesus is come in the flesh. This prophecy assures us, that he is to come again. What object is there, O christian, in nature, in providence, or in grace, wherein we do not behold the name of Jesus the Lord, written in golden characters? Learn to read it, and to understand it in all these, as you wish to know him, and be known of him, when he shall be displayed in the brightness of his glory.

To conclude: that you may be thus prepared, live in love to all them who love his appearance; you have one common interest in this dread event—you hope that it is to unite you to the Saviour and to one another for ever. Say then, dear immortal souls, is it decent, is it pleasant, is it profitable, is it for the honour of your expected Lord, that you should endeavour to mix gall in each others cup; and thereby help to embitter your own?—forbid it grace, forbid it love.

The end of the journey will, in spite of yourselves, bring you together; why quarrel like children by the way? Much of your race is already run—the Lord is at the door, with the prize in his hand: one crown of glory awaits all that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth.

But the shadows of the evening are thickening apace—it is time to part, and certain I am, we shall never all meet again, till the Judge cometh, and the heavens be no more. There is no scene, no season, that more reminds us of the judgment-day, than this place upon this occasion. O that all the precious souls here assembled might be found of the Saviour in peace in that day! O that then we might be blessed of God, to present ourselves and this great people which God has given unto us, faultless, and not so much as one missing, before "the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." O to be gathered once more together, on the opposite shore of the Jordan of death, and placed on the Judge's right hand. Let this heart-swelling consideration in the mean time engage us to labour more abundantly, as workers together with Christ, in gathering in, and feeding, and guarding, his lambs and his sheep, "taking the

" oversight thereof, not by constraint, but wil-
" lingly, neither as being lords over God's he-
" ritage, but being ensamples to the flock; and
" when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall
" receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.
" Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

SERMON XVII.

THESSALONIANS iv. 17.

Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

FOR A COMMUNION SABBATH.

ON A HAPPY ETERNITY.

BLESSED Jesus, how much do we owe thee, how much hast thou already done, how much art thou still doing, and O, how much hast thou still in reserve, for perishing sinners! What wonders of love do I see, do I feel, in all the stages of thy state of abasement, and in thy glorious exaltation, what a delightful mixture of condescending majesty and triumphant love: in thy life, in thy sufferings and death, in thy present mediatorial glory, my soul confesses thee, "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether "lovely;" but in the blessed hope of thy second glorious appearance, my joy is full, and my soul

rests with confidence in thee, as supremely, transcendently excellent. I rejoice in what by thy grace I am, but what bounds shall I set to my joy, when I consider, what by thy grace I shall be? How good a thing is it to be with thee here, to meet thee now and then, in meditation, in prayer, in thy word, in thy house, at thy table; but to be for ever with the Lord is a prospect so big with delight, that flesh and blood are ready to sink under such "an exceeding and "eternal weight of glory;" what it is to enjoy thee on earth, my much indebted soul this moment feels with rapture; but what it will be to enjoy thee in heaven, heaven itself must tell.

How can I better stir up your souls and my own, my much loved hearers, to a comfortable discharge of some small part of that infinite tribute of gratitude and love which we owe to our ever-to-be adored Lord and Master, than by leading forward your view for a little to that unchangeable state of unmixed happiness, purchased for us by a Saviour's blood, and which consists in being for ever with Christ, in seeing him as he is, in knowing him, "as also we are "known?" Let the few short moments we are to be with one another, and with our Saviour at his table this day, be devoted to the contem-

plation of that eternity, which we hope to enjoy with Jesus, and with one another, when time shall be no more. And has a frail, helpless worm, undertaken to speak of things invisible to mortal eyes, of themes to which the tongue of the seraphim is unequal? Almighty Spirit of wisdom and revelation be with his heart, be with his lips, and in his weakness magnify thy great power.

What then does thy faith and thy hope discern, O believer, in being ever with the Lord? these two things—eternal deliverance from all evil, and the eternal possession of all good: and it is the union of these which constitutes perfect happiness. Evil, my brethren, is of two kinds; there is the evil of sin, and the evil of suffering—and neither of these can ever dwell where God dwells: the perfect holiness of his nature dispels and rejects every thing that defileth, or is defiled—his perfect happiness diffusing itself through all the host of heaven, for ever dissipates every sensation of misery.—What, O my soul! and shall I then sin no more, shall this "evil heart of unbelief," never betray me again, to "depart from the living God?"—shall it never produce one evil thought, or word, or action more, to grieve, to afflict me? Never, for

" the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption " inherit incorruption:" the change therefore which we shall undergo, in order to fit us for celestial enjoyments, shall be such as fully, effectually, and for ever to purge our bodies and our souls from infirmity, from corruption, from pain: in order to our being ever with Jesus, we shall be made altogether like him, and first in our bodies: at his second appearing, " he shall change our " vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto " his glorious body."—It is now a vile body, unfit for, unworthy of being where Christ is; but it shall be purified, refined, glorified: it is now corruptible, mortal, naturally, necessarily tending to dissolution: it shall then be clothed with incorruption, with immortality, rendered unsusceptible of decay—it is now a natural body, allied to earth, fettered down to it—it shall be raised a spiritual body, capable of the vigour and agility which is ascribed now only to mind or spirit, capable of ascending " to meet the Lord " in the air," of mounting to the heaven of heavens, and breathing the pure air of those blissful regions.—Has not the grave then, O believer, lost all its horror? Canst thou not stand on its brink, and smile in the face of destruction itself? Was is it not already forced to yield up its most valuable prey, the sacred incorruptible

body of thy dear Lord, the first-fruits of them that sleep? and because he lives, thou shalt live also. Listen to his own encouraging voice: "O "death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will "be thy destruction." Ere long, the irresistible voice of the trump of God shall burst asunder its bars, and set the prisoners of hope for ever at large. The grave, O christian, is, in despite of itself, serving thy best interests—behold how it offers thee a calm retreat in its peaceful bosom, from sorrow and pain, and misery, for "there the wicked cease from troubling, and there "the weary are at rest." It is only serving the purpose of a refiner, and while it means to destroy, and pull down, is enforced to renew and build up. How much are we indebted to thee, thou friendly tomb—how is thy aspect changed, O thou king of terrors. I will call thee no longer by that name: thou shalt henceforth be the messenger of peace and joy, whose summons calls me to the beloved of my soul, to the enjoyment of my highest wish, to the blissful presence of my Saviour, my God, my all. O grave, I will call thee henceforward my bed of rest, from the fatigues of my wearisome pilgrimage, my hiding place, from the storms and tempests which agitate this sea of troubles; my adorning chamber, where my heavenly bridegroom shall

array me with the robes of immortality, and espouse me to himself for ever. Here, O my frail perishing body, will I put thee off, with all thy imperfections and diseases, and pains, that I may recover thee again, and be clothed with thee, raised up "a building of God, eternal in "the heavens." But dost thou still shrink back, O my coward heart; art thou still "through "fear of death subject to bondage;" does sin still enervate thee to such a degree? I will look straight on, I will think what it is to be ever with the Lord; I will dwell constantly on the delightful theme, till my Saviour surprize me into his presence, and give me eternal cause to wonder whereat I was afraid. And now I am got to the other side of this impetuous Jordan, now I am got to Jesus, my Lord—what change do I feel in my body, made like to Christ! but O, how much more transporting, what a change in my soul perfectly conformed to Christ there also!—Whither is that darkness fled, which so lately surrounded me, that mist of ignorance which clouded my understanding, and rendered me incapable of discerning the things of the Spirit of God? banished—dispelled: the shadows are fled away, the sun is arisen, I see its light, I feel its influence; but now, I saw "through a glass "darkly," the object was at a distance, the me-

dium was obscure, my eyes were weak—but, O delightful change, Jesus the bright object is brought nigh, the air is cleared up, my ravished eyes are strengthened, they now discern without an intervening cloud, "the king in his beauty;" the land of promise, once at a distance, is now seen at hand, it is enjoyed, possessed—and whence, O my soul, arises this light, this joy? from the blessed presence of my Saviour: how can I be in darkness, now I am with the fountain of light—how can I but know, when I see God as he is—how can my soul but be enlarged, when it contemplates and enjoys infinite perfection? Is your present ignorance, O believer, which arises from your fatal knowledge of sin, the source of sorrow and humiliation? when your acquaintance with Christ is completed, the cause and the effect shall cease at once, your blindness shall be lamented no more, for it shall be felt no more. Farther,

The evil of suffering, as it affects the soul, shall be done away, in as much as anxiety, doubt, fear, despondency, and every such feeling shall for ever cease. How many a poor trembling creature now hearing me, when I mention this, will have their hopes and fears at once alarmed? What would you give, my dear friends,

to have this saying verified in you? What would you give, to be beyond doubt and fear, those dead weights which hang so heavy on the soul, retarding its flight toward Jesus, marring the prospect of being ever with the Lord? What would I give? Were thousands of worlds in my possession, and could they purchase the mighty blessing, how cheerfully would I resign them; could ages of misery expiate my guilt, if I could come to Jesus at length, I would endeavour to submit; my soul should be supported under infinite suffering, though long and severe, with the blessed hope, of "that exceeding and eternal "weight of glory"—but O, I am haunted with the dreadful apprehension of everlasting banishment from the presence of the Lord to far different society, the thought of which I am altogether unable to support. Would to God, my dear fellow creature, I could take to myself, and communicate to you, the blessed assurance of eternal glory with Christ Jesus; you should not then long want the comfort you desire—but I will take to myself and offer to you, what this blessed gospel richly affords, and sufficiently warrants me to take and give, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ himself: if I cannot have assurance, I will have the Saviour, I will look out of myself altogether; I will listen to nothing

that arises out of my own heart, I will not even consider the work of God in my own soul, so much as the hand by which it is produced—I may err, I may meet with discouragement, if I only look inward, but I never can go wrong, I can never be disquieted, if my eyes are still directed upward, still toward Jesus, who infinitely exceeds even his own gifts. Let me then have the glorious Giver himself, and assurance his gift, just as he sees meet—let me live close to his hand, and then I shall want nothing that is truly good for me—I shall have full assurance in heaven, for I shall have full enjoyment, I shall be ever with the Lord. And as the understanding shall be purged of ignorance, of doubt, of perplexity, so the other powers of the soul shall derive from being present with the Lord a final deliverance from all corruption, from all excess—this crooked, perverse, rebellious will shall be no more reluctant to obey the will of God: "the carnal "mind, which is enmity against God," shall be then plucked up by the roots: indwelling sin shall no longer produce the violent struggle which the apostle Paul describes in such expressive terms: "To will is present with me, but how to per-"form that which is good I find not, for the good "that I would I do not, but the evil which I "would not that I do." One ray of the Savi-

ours's countenance seen in glory, shall so irradiate and overpower the whole soul, that it shall no longer be susceptible of weakness or perversion.—O how pure, and regular, and exalted, will all the affections then likewise become—the passions perfectly suited to their objects, shall effectually prevent any desire of the soul from being unsatisfied.—Which leads me to take the opposite, though corresponding view, of being ever with the Lord, as expressive not only of the absence of all evil, but of the presence and enjoyment of all possible good.—How our bodies shall be organized, and what positive happiness they shall enjoy, we know not, for here scripture is silent; but as there is to be a resurrection of the self same bodies, which are to retain their material substance; we are in safety to conclude, that regard shall be had to their immortal provision and comfort, suited to the qualities they shall then possess; but if we have any conception at all, of the actual positive joys of heaven, they are such as respect our nobler part, our immortal spirits, for though most of the scriptural ideas on this subject, are such as express freedom from bodily inconvenience, and the possession of the corporeal pleasures, yet it is evident that they are all metaphorical, and accommodated to present views and feelings;

we may take as an example, the following passage from the Revelations: "they shall hunger "no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall "the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the "Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall "feed them, and shall lead them unto living foun- "tains of waters, and God shall wipe away all "tears from their eyes." To be ever with the Lord, then, as the source of positive enjoyment to the glorified soul, may imply our knowing him perfectly, and delightfully, loving and being beloved of him, and the capability of rendering him a pure and perfect service.—And here we must draw all our conclusions, from present experience, and rise step by step from what we now know, and feel, and enjoy, to what we shall attain hereafter.

First then, to be with the Lord, is to know him, satisfyingly and delightfully.—The attainment of knowledge of any kind, in our present state, is one of the most plentiful sources of happiness, and in the pursuit of it, the human soul is restless and indefatigable—here "the eye is not "satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with "hearing"—but within how narrow bounds is all possible human knowledge circumscribed. "Here "we know but in part! now we see but as

"through a glass darkly"—the highest summit to which the most enlightened of the sons of men can rise in the discovery of natural, moral, or divine truth, compared to what the lowest of the glorified saints shall derive from one moment's presence with the Lord, is infinitely less than the glimmering of a candle, compared with the sun in his strength.—Then, O my soul, I shall contemplate infinite perfection at its source, I shall behold all the glorious attributes of the Deity in their strongest, brightest point of light; I shall perfectly comprehend the grand display of them in the wonders of creation, of providence, of redemption, for Jesus my Lord, the eternal Wisdom of the Father shall declare them unto me—with what delight shall I then trace out my own lot in the great scheme of providence and grace: how shall I then justify the wisdom and goodness of God, which here I am so often disposed to arraign—when I see the chain fully extended, and the connection and dependance of every link fully discovered—when I shall be fully satisfied, that what I now think cannot be, consistently with God's goodness and my happiness, could not have been otherwise—and O, how will each delightful discovery of this kind exalt my God in my soul.—Then Christ dwelling in my heart, not by faith, but by actual possession, and my glorified nature,

in him I shall "be able to comprehend what is "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, "and to know the love of Christ which passeth "knowledge," which is a subject inexhaustible, affording still new wonders, still fresh matter for the enlarged soul to study and pursue with rapture.—This leads me to observe,

Farther, that to be with the Lord, is to love him perfectly. The love of the creature is one great source of creature comfort, but like its object, it is unstable, unsatisfying, imperfect, and never does love become a spring of real solid joy, till it points at the glorious Creator, who is the only all-sufficient good—human love almost always destroys itself, it is its nature to seek after the acquaintance and possession of the beloved object, and that very acquaintance and possession, if attained, naturally tend to diminish its ardour—if missed, or too long deferred, the mind is wearied out, its edge is blunted, and it naturally takes a new turn—we soon come to see the utmost of the creature, and its perfection, and love, the effect of apprehended perfection, can rise no higher and last no longer than its cause; but with God, with infinite perfection, as knowledge is endless, so must love be likewise—new discern-

ed graces, must still produce new desires.—It is little of God you can know here, believers, and your love keeps pace with your knowledge; but when you are where Christ is, your love shall mount as high as your acquaintance; that is, it shall be perfect; ungratified love is always mixed with fear and suspicion, but "perfect love casteth "out fear"—and this love shall ever be kept alive, ever in exercise, from the constant sense of God's love, tasted, felt, enjoyed. To be ever with the Lord, is ever to feel a present and lively sense, and to enjoy the constant, visible effects of his love to us. Withdraw the love of God for a moment, and our love to him that moment expired—just as the stream is expended and dried up, when the fountain is stopped—just as the fire is extinguished, when the fuel is withdrawn, just as the moon is darkened, when the light of the sun is eclipsed. But being ever with the Lord, the fountain stands ever open, fresh fuel is ever administered, the glorious light of the Sun of righteousness is ever communicated, and thence our souls are ever satisfied with all the fullness of God, ever burn with a pure and ardent flame, ever shine in the Redeemer's splendor. Now, my soul, thou lovest little, because the effects of God's love are less sensible, less extensive: thou

shalt love much, thou shalt love perfectly, when the eternal treasures of love divine shall be disclosed to thy view, and put in thy possession.

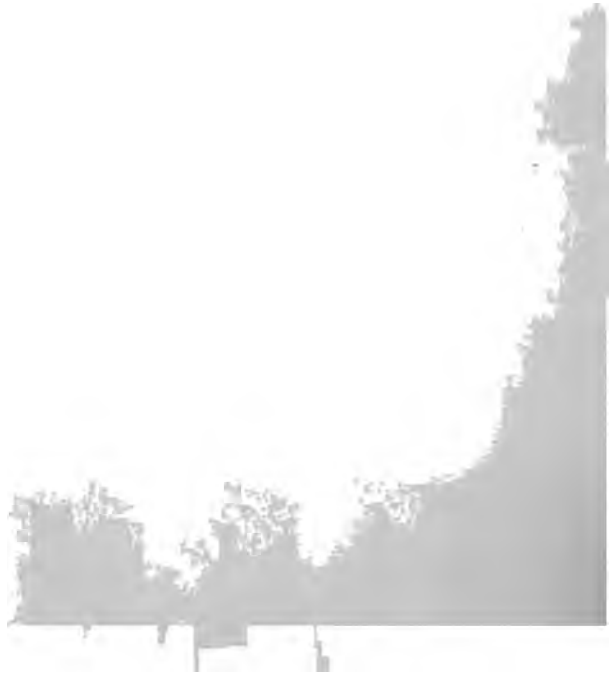
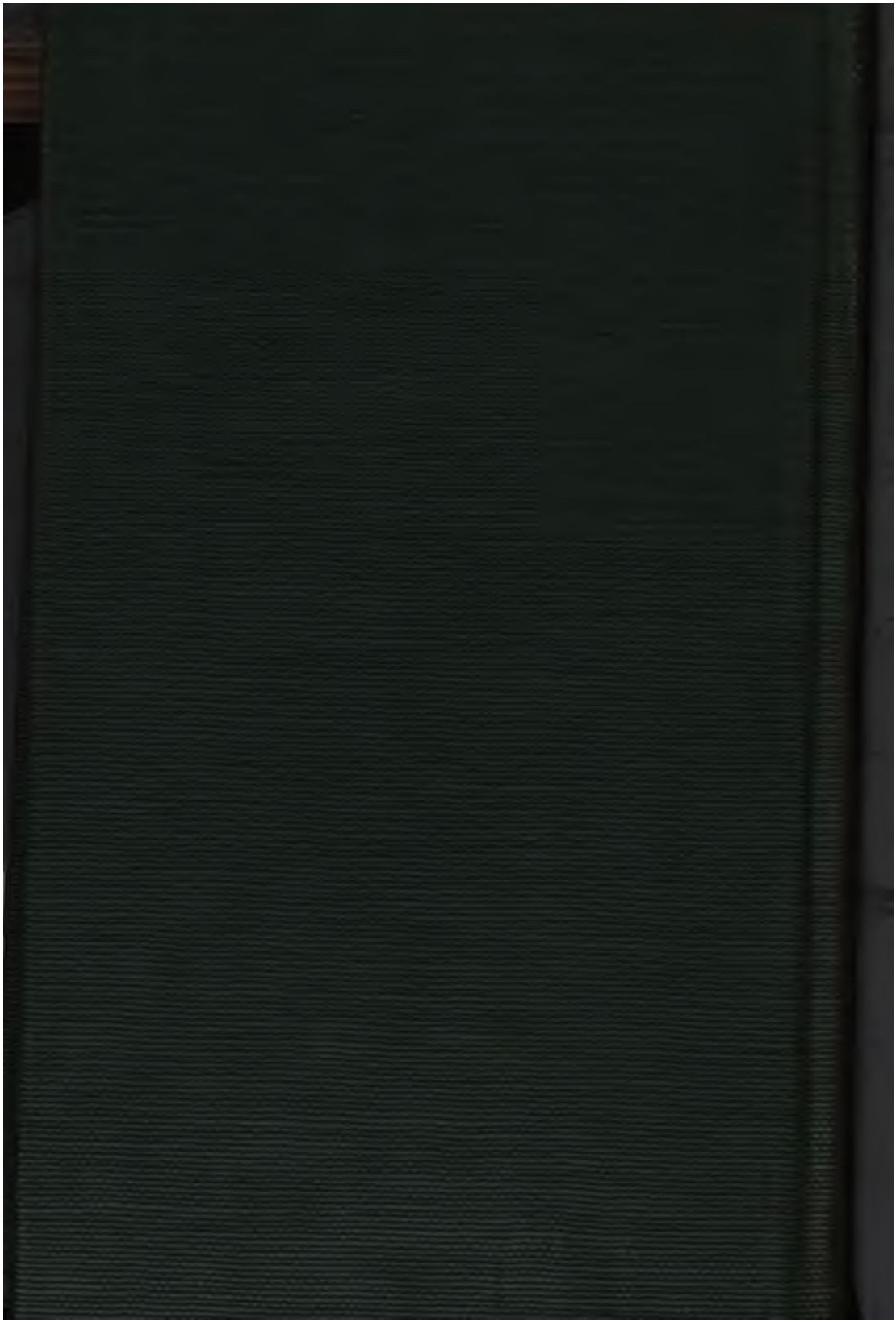
Once more. Being ever with the Lord, we shall ever render him a pure and perfect service. What a delightful state is here.—Our being present with Christ shall produce perfect knowledge, that knowledge, perfect love, that love, perfect obedience.—We count it joy, even to suffer hardships for the sake of one we love: we delight to be employed by one we love. Love gives a spur to industry, it kindles zeal, it strengthens and supports patience, and lengthens it out into perseverance, and this even when duty is hard, when compliance infers inconvenience and mortification: but O, how cheerful the obedience, how delightful the service, when duty is love, when compliance is inclination. And what, O my soul, shall I serve God perfectly, and be strengthened in body and in mind for it? O Lord, thou knowest, for thou knowest all things, that it is now my greatest grief, that my knowledge of thee is so imperfect, that I can love thee so little and serve thee to so little purpose—my soul reaches forward to that blessed state where imperfection shall for ever be done away; "that which is perfect being come," my soul ascends to Jesus, in whom a whole hea-

ven is comprized. It is his presence which makes it heaven—were not my Redeemer there, it could be no heaven for me—but he is the light, he is the life, he is the joy, he is the glory, he is the all in all, of that blessed abode. And what is now wanting, O believer, to fill up the measure of thy joy? Eternity is thrown into the cup, to make it overflow with bliss. Thou shalt be ever with the Lord; millions of ages of felicity come and gone, thy felicity is but beginning—Ages! Eternity has nothing to do with ages, time shall ere long expire, time shall find no place where thou art going, for time implies change, and change thou shalt never know more—thou shalt be ever with the Lord, thou shalt partake of his eternity as his crowning gift, as that which alone can qualify thee for the enjoyment of the rest.—Lift up your voices, O believers, imperfect saints on earth, lift up your voices, glorified, perfected saints in heaven; join, join your voices, angels of light, because ye partake of our joy, because ye, like us, shall be ever with the Lord.

And now, my dearly beloved friends, let us go together to the table of our dear Lord, and take a foretaste of celestial joys. I will not cloud your hearts a moment, by bringing into view our miserable fellow creatures, who are without God

in the world, and must be without him to eternity, without repentance; let us dismiss them for the present, with "God be merciful unto "them."—We must now be wrapped up in our own souls, or rather wrapped up in the glorious Jesus. When you survey these inestimable blessings, purchased for you, O consider how precious the blood, which was the price of their purchase. —What do I say? when you consider the infinite value of that precious blood, conclude how inconceivably great and glorious the heavenly happiness shall be, and may God of his infinite mercy fill us all with peace and joy in believing through Christ our Lord. Amen.

END OF VOL. I.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